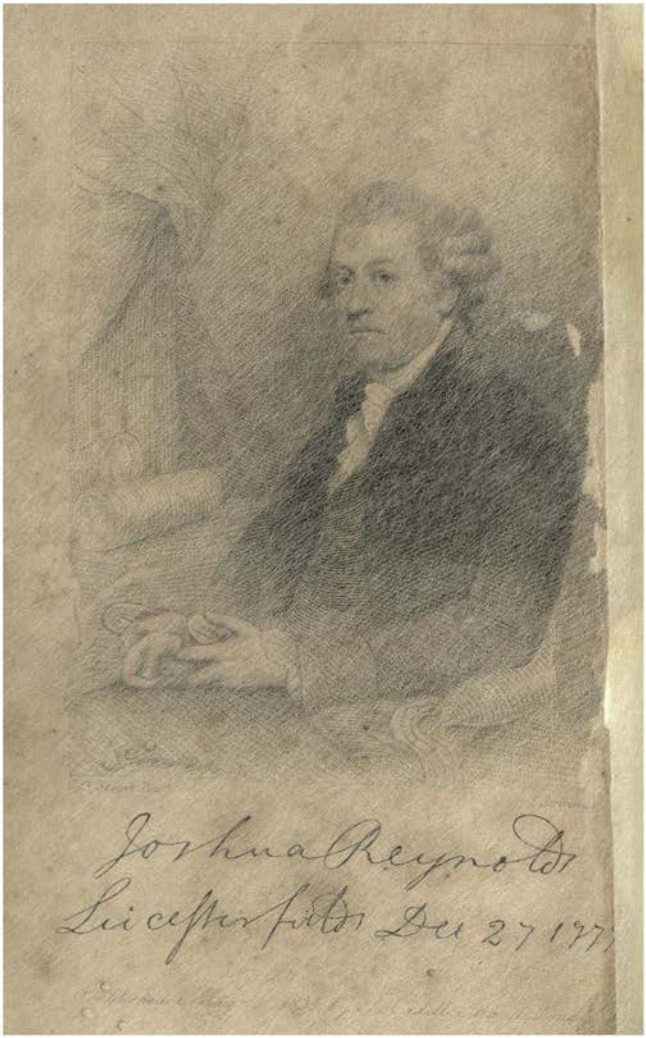
00081265

This book has been adopted
for conservation
by
Hermès India

A project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay

00081265

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 12 April, 2019


Joshua Reynolds
Leicester fields Dec 27 177

THE

LITERARY WORKS

OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS,

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

81265

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR;

WITH REMARKS ON HIS PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

HIS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE.

BY HENRY WILLIAM BEECHEY.

S. e-24

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
T. CADELL, STRAND;
W. BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH,
1835.

7.59.22.
Rey/Lit

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

TO

THE PRESIDENT,

AND OTHER MEMBERS,

OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

GENTLEMEN,

IF the work which I have ventured to dedicate to the members of the Royal Academy had no other claim to your patronage and encouragement than the merit displayed by its author, I should not have considered it sufficiently entitled to the distinction which I have aspired to. But a work which professes to treat chiefly on Art may not be unacceptable to artists; and the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds may be dedicated, with some appearance of propriety, to those who hold the first rank in that school of Art which has been founded on his practice and his principles.

It appeared to me, that former Lives of Sir Joshua were not well adapted to the use of students; and, in availing myself of the materials which other writers have afforded me, I have endeavoured to give a more artist-like character to that which I submit to your inspection, and have added new matter connected with painting, whenever an opportunity of introducing it presented itself.

Had I been able to confine myself more exclusively to the subject of art, I should, perhaps, have succeeded better in giving to my work the character which I intended it to assume; but the incidents of Reynolds's life, connected as they are with the biography of other celebrated characters of his time, and interesting as they have hitherto been considered, as forming part of the history of an individual with whom all that is in any way associated is matter of comparative importance, must always have a claim to notoriety as objects of public inquiry and solicitude; and I should not have been justified in omitting them, could I even have persuaded myself to do so.

The compilation of the work, from the most authentic sources, has cost me some time and some labour, and the student will find in its pages the

concentrated matter of several publications. In what I have added on the subject of Art, I have been guided, to the best of my judgment, by the principles which Sir Joshua himself has adopted, and which he has so ably discussed in his Lectures, and so forcibly exemplified in the works of his pencil. I have ventured to hope that the Memoir, as a whole, will not be found uninteresting to the public in general, and I trust that by students in painting, for whom it is, perhaps, most adapted, it will not be read without some advantage. Should I prove to have failed in the execution of my work, I have still a consolation in reserve; for I am confident that the members of the Royal Academy, who have ever been foremost in the promotion of art, and in the encouragement of those who have laboured in its cause, will appreciate the motive by which I have been actuated, and will not feel disposed to judge with severity, whatever be the merit or defects of this performance.

I have the honour to be,
Gentlemen,
With great esteem and respect,
Your most obedient and humble Servant,

HENRY W. BEECHEY.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

MEMOIR OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS 81

DISCOURSE I.

The advantages proceeding from the institution of a Royal Academy. — Hints offered to the consideration of the Professors and visiters. — That an implicit obedience to the rules of Art be exacted from the young students. — That a premature disposition to a masterly dexterity be repressed. — That diligence be constantly recommended, and (that it may be effectual) directed to its proper object. 305

DISCOURSE II.

The course and order of study. — The different stages of Art. —Much copying discountenanced. — The Artist at all times and in all places should be employed in laying up materials for the exercise of his Art 314

DISCOURSE III.

The great leading principles of the grand style. — Of beauty. — The genuine habits of nature to be distinguished from those of fashion 329

DISCOURSE IV.

General ideas the presiding principle which regulates every part of Art; Invention, Expression, Colouring, and Drapery. — Two distinct styles in history-painting; the grand and the ornamental. — The schools in which each is to be found. — The composite style. — The style formed on local customs and habits, or a partial view of nature..... 344

DISCOURSE V.

Page

Circumspection required in endeavouring to unite contrary excellencies. — The expression of a mixed passion not be attempted. — Examples of those who excelled in the great style. — Raffaelle, Michael Angelo, those two extraordinary men compared with each other. — The characteristical style. — Salvator Rosa mentioned as an example of that style; and opposed to Carlo Maratti. — Sketch of the characters of Poussin and Rubens. — These two Painters entirely dissimilar, but consistent with themselves. — This consistency required in all parts of the Art. 364

DISCOURSE VI.

Imitation. — Genius begins where rules end. — Invention: acquired by being conversant with the inventions of others. — The true method of imitating. — Borrowing, how far allowable. — Something to be gathered from every school. 381

DISCOURSE VII.

The reality of a standard of taste as well as of corporal beauty. — Beside this immutable truth, there are secondary truths, which are variable; both requiring the attention of the Artist, in proportion to their stability or their influence. 406

DISCOURSE VIII.

The principles of Art, whether Poetry or Painting, have their foundation in the mind; such as novelty, variety, and contrast; these in their excess become defects. — Simplicity, its excess disagreeable. — Rules not to be always observed in their literal sense; sufficient to preserve the spirit of the law. — Observations on the Prize Pictures ... 438

ERRATA IN VOL. I.

Page 80. line 11., for "as advocate," read "as the advocate."
83. last line, for "as it has," read "and as it has."
109. line 16. from bottom, for "with," read "to."
155. line 4. from bottom, for "was," read "were."
175. line 17. from bottom, for "know," read "knew."

INTRODUCTION.

WE cannot properly judge to what extent the arts of this country are indebted to the labours of Sir Joshua Reynolds, without turning our attention to the state in which he found them at the period when he came to their rescue; and, if we estimate, at the same time, the results of the labours of others, who had previously endeavoured to advance or to maintain the art of painting in England, we may be led to consider the nature of the means which they employed in their professional pursuits, and the difference between these and the means employed by Reynolds to forward his own views of art. It will then be more apparent why those who preceded him have not effected more than they have done; and why Sir Joshua himself has been so eminently successful in accomplishing the object which he always contemplated, — that of dignifying and extending the art of his country — and in establishing his brilliant reputation on a basis which cannot be shaken.

The native artists who flourished before the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds, with any pretensions to eminence, are but very few in number; and, till he

appeared, Great Britain had been chiefly indebted to foreigners for what it had witnessed of genuine art. We can scarcely account for this humiliating circumstance on the grounds of any national incapacity for painting peculiar to the artists of the soil; and this is not the age in which advantages or disadvantages of climate can be offered as reasons for failure or success in any intellectual pursuit. Besides, if natural causes may be supposed to have operated in preventing the early growth of art in this country, it is reasonable to infer, that the same causes would continue to operate in retarding its progress when it began to display itself: but we do not see that any insurmountable objections interfere to impede the farther progress of British art in its present advanced state, and cannot understand, if such had ever existed, why they did not contribute to stifle in their birth the efforts which it has so successfully made. It is true that, with regard to Historical Painting, and the higher departments of Landscape, we have difficulties to contend with which do not exist in the climates and local peculiarities of Italy and other southern portions of Europe; but these can only be considered as partial impediments, and do not, certainly, amount to objections of vital importance: in Portrait-Painting we have little beyond the disadvantages of a tasteless costume to encounter; and we have already been taught, by the genius of Reynolds, that even these may be rendered subservient to the fancy and contrivance of the artist. We find, also, that, at times which may be

said to have been favourable to art, the costume of Great Britain was rich and picturesque, and rather afforded facilities than presented impediments to the painter; yet, the portraits of the present day are far superior to those of native artists at the periods alluded to; and art has made greater progress, under manifest disadvantages of costume, than it did when the national dress was advantageous. It was ignorance of the dignity and creative powers of art, and not the want of proper objects to represent, or the presence of any exclusively national disadvantages, that made the works of our early British artists inferior to those of modern times; and it was the light derived from intellectual sources, operating upon a powerful and discriminating mind, that first enabled Reynolds to overcome greater difficulties of costume, than had ever presented themselves to our ancestors, and, ultimately, to attain a higher degree of excellence in portrait-painting, than had ever been previously reached.

The means of improvement that Sir Joshua took advantage of, were not, however, afforded, with very few exceptions, to the painters of England who preceded him; and we must also recollect that, if they had been afforded, British art was not prepared, till after the reign of Charles I., to avail itself of any such auxiliaries. The practical or executive part of the art had not been sufficiently attained by British painters, to enable them to soar into the regions of imagination, and look steadily to the great end of art,

unencumbered by mechanical difficulties. It was not till after the study of the works of Vandyke, and other masters of the Flemish school, as well as those of Lely and Kneller, both of them foreign artists, had supplied the deficiencies of early British art, and made the painter acquainted with his tools, that our artists were qualified to receive impressions derived from intellectual sources; and it was, either because they neglected to acquire such impressions, when the executive parts of the profession were attained, or, in most cases, had not the means of access to the works from which they might have been derived, that the art may be said to have worn itself out in the hands of the immediate predecessors of Reynolds. We may fairly assume that the productions of this admirable painter gave the first great stimulus to British art, and showed to British artists the extent of their deficiencies, and the means by which they might be remedied; but, if the sources from which he drank so deeply of excellence be looked for in the soil which was trodden by his early instructors, in the knowledge which he gained of his art from any sources exclusively Flemish or British, the search will be made there in vain: he had, indeed, acquired a bold and decided style of painting, a firmness and freedom of execution, and a certain taste of colour superior to that of the artists who were his contemporaries, before he left England to study in Italy; but we may venture to affirm, that, if he had never enjoyed the opportunities of comparing the results of his early education with

the works of Italian genius, he would never have attained that high superiority, which is now so universally allowed to him, and would, probably, never have carried portrait-painting farther than Hogarth or Gainsborough have carried it. There was nothing in England to create that admirable taste, that fine perception, of what is noble and beautiful in nature, which enabled Sir Joshua Reynolds to raise the character of British art, and to establish it on a solid foundation. It was the study of those principles on which Raphael and Michel Angelo had formed their comprehensive and elevated views of nature, which first enabled Reynolds to perceive his own deficiencies, to appreciate the value of intellectual art, and to employ it in dignifying that of his country.

The application of what is emphatically termed "the grand style of art," and often sarcastically alluded to as such, to those departments of painting which appear, on a superficial view, to have no connection with elevated nature, has not been thought practicable by many who have written and talked on the subject; but the works of Michel Angelo and Raphael may be accessory in forming the style of a portrait-painter, by leading him to consider the means which those great men employed in raising the standard of nature to sublimity; and Reynolds had the tact to discover in what those means consisted, and the power to apply them to the elevation of nature in his own peculiar branch of the art. Of his ability to employ them with equal success in the higher depart-

ments of the profession, we have scarcely the means of judging correctly; for the disadvantages of his early education, in which design was so obviously neglected as to render it impossible for him, at any period of his life, to draw the naked figure with anatomical precision, would always operate to prevent his making frequent attempts of such a nature; and each of those which he actually made has evidently cost him more trouble, in contrivances to hide his want of drawing, than the management of all the rest of his picture. The consciousness of these disadvantages, and not the want of natural powers, as it has been, we think, incautiously asserted, may be fairly alleged as the principal reason why Sir Joshua devoted himself more exclusively to portraiture as the style of art for which he considered that his previous education had most qualified him. It was too late in life, when he returned from Italy, to think of commencing an academic course of study; and, as the taste of the country was decidedly in favour of portrait-painting, he judged wisely in taking the path to fame which circumstances clearly pointed out to him. We firmly believe, that, in doing so, he has effected more for the arts of his country, than if he had been enabled to attain the same degree of excellence in historical painting that he actually reached in his peculiar department, in which he may be said to have formed a new style, superior to that of any artist who preceded him; a style which, though founded on the principles of other schools, may be said to be exclusively his own, and was eminently qualified to

remedy the defects, and supply the deficiencies, of British art in the miserable state in which he found it.

Many circumstances had conspired to prevent the developement of British talent in painting and sculpture, for centuries before the genius of Reynolds and of Flaxman gave the stimulus which roused them into action, and pointed out the true path to excellence. The martial spirit which prevailed so exclusively at early periods of our history, and the ruthless civil wars by which the nation was frequently convulsed, had greatly contributed to crush the rising efforts, and to check the advancement of art. The little intercourse enjoyed by this country with the Continent, where art had long flourished, and was gradually improving, materially retarded the formation of a national taste for true excellence, and conspired to encourage the prevailing tastes of different eras, in all their degradation or extravagance; while, in later times, the change in the national religion most unfortunately excluded us from the regions of art, at a period when the advantages which might have been derived from them were much greater than they had ever been before.

The change from Catholicism to the Protestant faith —the greatest blessing, in other respects, which the country has ever enjoyed—may be considered as the most serious check that British art has hitherto received. It brought with it, at its first introduction, so decided a prejudice against the elegancies of life, that painting and sculpture were either thought to be unnecessary pursuits, or conscientiously discouraged, as

tending to encourage idolatry and superstition, and to minister to passion and luxury. When more enlightened views of art and more extended notions of religious propriety had superseded the mistaken prejudices of the early Reformers, and the fanaticism or hypocrisy of the Puritans, greater latitude was given to the national taste, and the liberal professions began to assume their proper rank in the scale of intellectual pursuits: but still the want of that encouragement, which the Roman Catholic religion had given to the higher departments of art, must have operated in retarding the progress of British artists; and, even in the present day, the absence of such encouragement is generally allowed to be a serious obstacle to the efforts of our historical painters.

The period of our early history, in which art appears to have been most in request, was marked by the introduction of foreign artists into England in the reign of Henry III.: they were employed in adorning the royal castle at Winchester; and their works are recorded to have been worthy of commendation. Walpole has supposed them to have been historical; but the art of this reign, like that of many succeeding ones, was chiefly confined to the formal and uncouth delineation of religious subjects; and, whatever appearance it might occasionally assume, there was little in it deserving of notice. The artist united many other occupations, which may be considered as purely mechanical, with that of painting, and occupied a subordinate, or rather a servile, station in society.

The value of his work was estimated by the costliness of the materials employed in it, and the invention which was necessary to its structure had but slender connection with intellect.*

* Mr. Cunningham, in his "Lives of the British Painters," has extracted the following curious passage from a book belonging to the church of St. Mary at Bristol: it refers to a religious pageant, which appears (says this lively and intelligent writer) "to have been composed of very strange materials, and to have been the united production of all the incorporations:"—

"Memorandum: That Master Cumings hath delivered, on the 4th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1470, to Mr. Nicholas Bettes, Vicar of Radcliffe, Moses Couteryn, Philip Bartholomew, and John Brown, procurators of Radcliffe, beforesaid, a new sepulchre, well gilt, and cover thereto; an image of God Almighty, arising out of the said sepulchre, with all the ordinance that longeth thereto; that is to say — Item: A lath, made of timber, and iron-work thereto. — Item: Thereto longeth Heaven, made of timber and stained cloth — Item: Hell, made of timber and iron-work, with devils in number thirteen. — Item: Four knights, armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands; that is to say, two axes and two spears. — Item: Three pair of angels' wings; four angels, made of timber, and well painted. — Item: The Father, the crown and visage, the ball, with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold. — Item: The Holy Ghost coming out of Heaven into the sepulchre. — Item: Longeth to the angels four chevelers."

The manufacturer of this curious work of art must have united the several occupations of carpenter, joiner, carver, gilder, and painter; and he was no doubt paid according to the number of items, and the actual value of the materials employed in the construction of the sepulchre.

The written instructions left by Henry VIII. for a monument to his own memory will serve equally to illustrate the state of public taste in this country at a period when Italy was inspired by the genius of Michel Angelo, of Raphael, and of Titian; and

The practice of illuminating missals, and other works of public interest in literature, appears to have contributed, in these barbarous ages, to promote the advancement of art; and its effects may be traced in the difference of style, observable in the copies still existing, of these memorials of Gothic labour and magnificence: but the invention of printing considerably diminished the number of these elegant transcripts, and the practice fell gradually into disuse, till, at length, it was wholly discontinued. The beauty of these performances consisted chiefly in the brilliancy and depth of their local colouring; for there was little attempt at gradation, in any of them, either of colour or light and shade; but the invention of the artist must have been more or less called upon in these frequent attempts at composition, and the art was proportionably improved.

The introduction of tapestry, as an ornament of furniture, may, however, be supposed to have materially contributed to extend the circulation, and to improve the quality, of art; it was in very general use in the reign of Henry VIII., and is thought to have

---

united within its narrow limits more artists of distinguished ability than have ever since appeared in Europe. The instructions direct that "the King shall appear on horseback, of the stature of a goodly man; while over him shall appear the image of God the Father, holding the King's soul in his left hand, and his right extended in the act of benediction." This work was to have been executed in bronze, and was considerably advanced when Elizabeth put a stop to its progress. It was afterwards sold by the Puritan parliament for six hundred pounds.

been partially introduced at earlier periods of our history. Works of such description were originally copies from pictures of local interest or general celebrity; but the subjects employed in this beautiful species of ornament were subsequently invented by artists of high reputation, expressly for the purpose of being wrought into tapestry, and were executed from drawings made either by themselves or their pupils. The Cartoons of Raphael are well known to have been designed for this object, and other painters of celebrity have contributed to the amusement and instruction of our ancestors, through the medium of this interesting manufacture. Ladies of rank often employed themselves in working pieces of tapestry, and high prices were paid for such as could be procured from artisans who manufactured them for sale. Portrait-painting had also been occasionally practised from a very early period of our history; but till Holbein appeared, to confirm the public taste for it, there was nothing of interest in the examples of this species of art, beyond that which the celebrity of the persons represented was calculated to excite in the spectator.

In the latter part of the reign of Henry VII., and during that of his tyrannical successor, the art of painting rose to a height, in Italy, which has never since been reached in any country; and the influence of genius extended itself far and wide over the whole of civilised Europe. It was then that the matchless powers of Correggio, of Leonardo da Vinci, Michel Angelo and Raphael, of Titian, Giorgione, Tintoret,

and Paul Veronese, conspired to astonish the world, and to form a splendid galaxy of talent to chase away the darkness of Gothicism from the regions of art for ever.

There is reason to believe that, if the tenets of the Roman Catholic religion had not ceased to be observed in Great Britain at this interesting period, the art of painting would have made rapid strides under the influence of so powerful an impulse. The youthful Henry was rich and munificent; and, though he had neither taste nor true love for the art, he was emulous of rivalling the glory of those who could boast of having genius in their train; and the introduction of Italian art and artists into England would probably have raised the British monarch to the enviable distinction of sharing in the triumphs of Leo X., Charles V., and Francis I.

But the Reformation came, and the brilliant prospect vanished: art and literature bowed beneath the chilling influence of Protestantism; and the zeal for the new religion displayed itself in the destruction of all that contributed to adorn or to illustrate the preceding one. The new Church looked with horror on every thing stigmatised as popish, and works of art were banished from its temples as idolatrous, and consigned to the axe or the flames.

What was actually destroyed in this violent convulsion is not, perhaps, so much to be regretted, as the consequences of that narrow-minded spirit which urged the Reformers to wage a war of extermination

against talent and genius, and to include the noble efforts of Italian art in the anathema pronounced against the Romish religion; the torrent of prejudice was too strong to be checked by the more liberal feeling of rational discrimination; and England lost the first and the greatest opportunity of improvement which has ever been afforded to the arts of the country.

We say, the greatest opportunity, because it is probable that Venetian art might, at that time, have been naturalised in the soil, and its principles instilled into English artists by those who could at the same time have illustrated, by the progress of their works, those important peculiarities of the school which still remain subjects of conjecture, and are sought for through the medium of imperfect experiments. The principles of Roman art are sufficient for its elucidation; but no theory can illustrate the process of Venetian colourists, on which so much of the power and the brilliancy of their pictures may be said to depend exclusively. A great portion of the valuable life of Reynolds was devoted to this particular object; and the repeated experiments which he made in the pursuit of it unassisted by chemical knowledge, have been the cause of that deplorable state in which many of his noble works at present remain. His feeling appreciated the excellence which he was uncertain how to obtain, and which the progress of a single picture of Titian's, could he but have witnessed it, would have enabled him to secure. Much labour and time has been expended

in the same pursuit by others, with less success than crowned the labours of Reynolds; and much more will still continue to be employed in it, while any thing remains to be discovered, and while any true feeling for art shall remain to appreciate the value of the discovery.*

It must not be imagined that we have any intention of detracting from the value of intellectual art, still less that we think of placing the works of the Roman school below those of the painters of Venice. That species of art which requires the greatest mental exertion, and the highest and most cultivated powers in the artist, must always rank first in the scale: but the noble productions of Michel Angelo and Raphael afford sufficient comments on themselves, and he who studies the principles on which they are painted, with equal capacity of applying them, and equal advantages of study, of patronage, and of encouragement, may reasonably anticipate an equally successful result to his attempts in historical painting. But the student of Venetian art has no sufficient guide to direct him in his researches; the mysteries of colour lie deeply hidden, and general principles will be of little more avail than in preventing the painter from falling into manifest error, and enabling him to be coldly correct. A great part of the beauty of Venetian colour will be

* The style of Reynolds, as a colourist, may be said to have been formed more exclusively upon that of Correggio than any other; but Venetian art presented to him a much wider range, and he was never weary of indulging in the study of it.

found, as we have already observed, to depend upon the process employed in producing it, and probably, also, upon the nature of the materials in use among the artists alluded to; and although it is certain that the knowledge required is not sufficient of itself to make a colourist, yet, without it, the perfection of this fascinating school will assuredly never be attained.

There are many who will tell us that the art would gain little by the acquisition of these peculiarities, and that other schools of painting have arrived at great excellence without the arcana of Venice; but Reynolds, though no one could better appreciate the true value of every style of art, was indefatigable in his search after that of the Venetians, as possessing the highest degree of excellence in colour; and with those who are inclined to dispute his authority we have no disposition to contend. It is evident that his feeling, exquisite as it was, was unequal to the task which he assigned himself; and we can neither persuade ourselves that the feeling of others will do more, or that he really employed himself so zealously on objects of trifling importance.

At the same time, we freely confess that such researches are not to be countenanced in youthful proficients in painting, who have much to learn before they can be qualified to attempt the solution of a mystery which Reynolds has failed to discover. Indeed, Sir Joshua himself was so fearful of encouraging students to venture on the sea of experiment, the unavoidable element of those who study the works of

the Venetians, and so certain that no positive good could result from the labours of those who embarked upon it, without experience to guide them on their way, that, by contrasting the allurements of colour with the more important beauties of elevated character and form, he showed at once the superiority of works of intellect over those which he has classed as "ornamental," and urged the youthful professor to the study of the grand style of art in the performances of Michel Angelo and Raphael. In giving this advice, he proved the correctness of his judgment, and his ability to point out to the student the surest and the highest path to excellence; the refinement of his feeling for colour was displayed in the quiet researches of his painting-room.

England was not destined to enjoy the advantages which might reasonably have been expected to result from the introduction of Italian art and Italian artists into the country, during the reign of Henry VIII. Works of art had no charms for the early Reformers, who busied themselves in destroying what Catholic magnificence had accumulated, and systematically neglected to supply the deficiency by encouraging talent and genius among themselves.

Still the reign of Henry may be considered as favourable to art. He laid the foundation of that valuable collection of pictures, which was afterwards so highly enriched by Charles I., and formed the pride of that noble-minded but ill-fated monarch, and the ornament of his palace at Whitehall. At

Henry's suggestion, Hans Holbein accompanied the Earl of Arundel to England; and the talent of that eminent artist was employed in perpetuating the grace and loveliness of English beauties, and in consigning to posterity the features of those celebrated personages whose talents and achievements added lustre to the court and honour to the country for which they were exerted. The works of Holbein in England were numerous; but few of them survived the furious zeal of the early Reformers and the fanaticism and avarice of the Puritans. The original drawings which he made of the distinguished personages of Henry's court are, however, still preserved in the royal collection, of which they form an interesting portion; they are executed in chalk, on tinted paper, with little attempt at light and shadow, and are characterised by a vigour and freedom of execution which his pictures do not always possess. The painter enjoyed a pension of two hundred florins from the court, and continued to exercise his profession with indefatigable assiduity, till the plague put an end to his career in 1554, twenty-two years before the death of Titian, by the same disease. Still it does not appear that native talent was excited to display itself; and no British painter came forward to share the fortune or to rival the merit of Holbein. A better taste for the art had, however, been manifested: our churches began to assume some appearance of Catholic magnificence; and the introduction of the works of Italian genius would probably have

given the stimulus which was wanting to English artists, had it not been so suddenly and so seriously checked by the memorable change in the national religion.

The effects of the mistaken zeal of the early Reformers continued to operate more or less upon the taste of the nation, till the reign of Charles I., when the appearance of Rubens and Vandyke in this country opened new prospects to British art.* Charles was fond of art and literature, and took pride in encouraging them: he soon amassed a fine collection of the works of foreign artists, and extended his patronage to native talent wherever it could be found. The royal collection, as we have already

* Sir Antonio More flourished in this interval, and stood high in the favour of Philip, who bestowed upon him a chain of gold for his portrait of Queen Mary, and a pension of four hundred a year as painter to the King. More followed Philip into Spain, and lived there in much splendour, till the consideration in which he was held by his royal master drew upon him the displeasure of the Inquisition: he accordingly retired from the country, and attached himself to the Duke of Alva, who caused him to be appointed receiver of the revenue of West Flanders, a post so lucrative, that he is said to have given up painting on obtaining it.

Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, Hilliard and the elder Oliver began to distinguish themselves. The works of the latter, as well as those of the younger Oliver, who flourished in the succeeding reign, are miniatures, and possess considerable merit. Under James appeared Mytens, a native of the Hague; who was much encouraged, and subsequently pensioned, by that monarch. He was at first employed in portraiture; but afterwards made small copies of the works of the Italian masters, which he executed with great ability. In the reign of Elizabeth, Frederigo Zucchero was also much employed in England.

stated, originated with Henry VIII.; it appears to have contained in his time one hundred and fifty pieces, including miniatures; and, considering the state of public taste at that period, the foreign wars in which Henry engaged, and his contest with the church of Rome, it must be owned that he did much for the art. Charles I. added greatly to this collection; and we find that the contents of his noble gallery at Whitehall amounted to 460 pictures, from the pencils of thirty-seven different artists. Among these were eleven by Holbein, eleven by Correggio, sixteen by Giulio Romano, ten by Mytens, seven by Parmeggiano, nine by Raphael, seven by Rubens, three by Rembrandt, seven by Tintoret, twenty-eight by Titian, sixteen by Vandyke, four by Paul Veronese, and two by Leonardo da Vinci. The gallery soon became a place of general attraction, and the king himself was oftener found there than in his private apartments. The nobles were proud of imitating the example of their monarch; and purchased largely, wherever opportunities presented themselves. The Duke of Buckingham persuaded Rubens to sell him his own private collection, consisting of thirteen pictures by the hand of that accomplished artist, of nineteen by Titian, thirteen by Paul Veronese, seventeen by Tintoret, three by Leonardo da Vinci, and three by Raphael. The king's brother, Prince Henry, shared the taste of his royal kinsman; and the Earl of Arundel formed a noble collection of works of art, consisting principally, however, of sculpture. Costly

presents, such as those which had been offered by foreign nations to Elizabeth and James, of which the richness of the materials constituted the only value, were no longer thought in character with the taste of the English court, and the choicest works of art were now substituted in lieu of them. The Cain and Abel of John di Bologna, and Titian's Venus del Pardo, were presented by the King of Spain; and other states sent presents of a similar nature. Charles employed skilful painters to copy what he could not purchase, and obtained the Cartoons of Raphael through the interposition of Rubens, and the collection of the Duke of Mantua, consisting of eighty-two pictures, chiefly by Giulio Romano, Titian, and Correggio, through the medium of the Duke of Buckingham. He wrote a letter with his own hand, inviting Albano to England, and though it failed of success, yet the merit of the attempt is due to him, and the wish to improve English art by the introduction of foreign artists into the country. Accident, however, effected what kingly influence was unable to accomplish; and British talent must indeed have been inert, when the genius of Rubens could not rouse it. This great painter was despatched to the English monarch, ostensibly in his professional capacity, but charged, at the same time, with a private mission from the court of Spain; he was welcomed with honour, and induced to employ his vigorous and brilliant pencil in embellishing the Banqueting-Room at Whitehall with a representation of the apotheosis of King James;

which was not however painted on the spot, but sent over in a finished state. Rubens staid, unfortunately, but one year in England; yet his works were not without their effect on the taste of the nation, though they failed in calling forth the powers of British artists. A second stimulus was given by the arrival of Vandyke, with more success, yet without any proportionate result; and of this we had nearly been deprived by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances. The reported liberality of the English monarch and his court induced Vandyke to make a journey to England: he arrived in London, in the year 1632, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, but found his reception so little satisfactory that he returned, after a short stay, to the Continent. The king was soon made acquainted with the value of the prize which he had lost, and employed Sir Kenelm Digby, with success, to prevail upon him to renew his visit. Vandyke was appointed one of the royal painters, and soon gave sufficient evidence of his abilities to establish his fame and his fortune. He painted several splendid portraits of Charles, and the lovely Henrietta still lives in his works in all her native grace and dignity. The exertions of the artist were not without their reward; he was honoured with the distinction of knighthood, and a pension of two hundred a year was assigned him, — in those days, an ample allowance.*

* Scotland, at this period, produced an artist of considerable merit, occasionally distinguished as the Scottish Vandyke. George

Of the immediate result of so powerful a stimulus over the arts and the artists of England, we have not at present the means of judging; other matter than that of art was in general agitation, and "a change came o'er the spirit" of the time, as fatal to royalty itself as to the progress which painting might have made. Another general wreck of art ensued; and what survived the unfeeling bigotry of the Puritans was made subservient to the gratification of their avarice, and disposed of, without reference to any thing but profit, to supply their pretended or their actual necessities. The royal galleries afforded ample scope for the indulgence of superstition and covetousness; and the "war in the north" made an excellent pretence for the ravages to which they were subjected. Art was proclaimed to be profane or superfluous, and it was accounted meritorious to despise whatever tended to increase external dignity. The new government proceeded to sell by public auction the hereditary furniture of the palaces, and to dispose of the contents of

---

Jameson was a native of Aberdeen, the son of an architect, and went abroad to study under Rubens, at the time that Vandyke was also his pupil. He returned to Scotland in 1628, and commenced his professional career at Edinburgh. He made some successful attempts in landscape and history, but attached himself eventually to portrait-painting, and acquired much fame in that department. Many of his works are still to be found in the houses of the Scottish nobility and gentry, and some in the college of his native place. When Charles went to Scotland, in 1633, he sat to Jameson for his portrait, and rewarded him with a diamond ring from his own finger.

the royal collections, of which a list was made out, with imaginary prices, and the object named to which the sums obtained from the sale were said to be exclusively devoted. The journals of the House of Commons of July 23. 1645, afford us the following proclamation:—"Ordered; that all such pictures and statues there (York House is the place alluded to), as are without any superstition, shall be forthwith sold for the benefit of Ireland and the North. Ordered; that all such pictures there, as have the representation of the Virgin Mary upon them shall be forthwith burnt. Ordered; that all such pictures there, as have the representation of the second person in the Trinity upon them shall be forthwith burnt."—"A worthy contrast," says Walpole, "to Archbishop Laud, who made a Star-Chamber business of a man who broke some painted glass in the Cathedral at Salisbury." It does not appear, however, that the order for the dispersion and destruction of the royal collections was immediately put in force, or ever, indeed, fully obeyed. The sales lingered for six or eight years, and were retarded by the unsettled state of the republican government, and the intrigues of the politic Cromwell. Even the order for the destruction of paintings representing the Virgin and the Saviour were very imperfectly fulfilled. The Puritans were satisfied with having voted them superstitious; and, having piously eased their consciences, did not scruple to fill their coffers with the profits of such works as were allowed to escape the flames, and to pass silently into the pos-

session of private purchasers, whom they were, probably, unwilling to disoblige, and glad to place under contribution. Cromwell felt, truly, that lustre is necessary to a court; and, as soon as he became possessed of absolute power, put an end to all the sales of the royal furniture and paintings: but for many fine works this order came too late; they had been dispersed beyond recall. Some of the best were bought by the king of Spain, and arrived at Madrid at the same time with the ambassador of the exiled Charles; "a circumstance," observes the author of the elaborate and entertaining work from which we extract many of these details, "which puzzled sorely the Spanish etiquette."*

It seems probable, after all, that very many of the royal pictures still remained in England; for when Pepys visited the royal gallery, he declares that he missed but few of his old favourites; and we see by the catalogue of James II. that the crown was in his time possessed of many of its ancient paintings. But the unfortunate fire at Whitehall completed what the Puritans did imperfectly, and destroyed a vast number of works of art.

Of the painters who flourished during the Commonwealth, there is little of interest to be recorded.† The Restoration brought forward Sir Peter Lely, who had already distinguished himself under the go-

* Cunningham's Lives of the British Painters.

† Cooper may be said to be the only British painter of merit at this period; and his works are miniatures. He studied under Vandyke.

vernment of Cromwell, and introduced a style of art in unison with the character of the court, and not better calculated to elevate the taste than to improve the moral feeling of the nation. Lely was a painter of considerable talent, and many of his portraits very justly rank high in the art; but he was too decided a mannerist to attain superior excellence; and they who took his works for models were more likely to imitate his defects than to acquire a knowledge of his actual merits. To Lely succeeded Sir Godfrey Kneller, with less taste and imagination than his predecessor, and with no higher qualities of any kind; and here we lose all traces of the little talent in painting, by which England was distinguished, from the time of the Commonwealth to the reign of George I. It will be seen that, in the whole of the period which elapsed between the reigns of Henry VIII. and that of George, only two artists of superior ability appeared amongst us,—for such were Rubens and Vandyke; and three of more than ordinary talent,—Holbein, Lely, and Kneller. All these were of foreign extraction, and had studied their art in other countries. Their labours failed to excite British artists to emulate them; and, with the exception of the few which have already been mentioned, there were no native artists, during a space of two centuries, the period during which art existed in the country, whose names deserved to survive them.*

* Jameson, Hilliard, the two Olivers, and Cooper; perhaps Dobson and Riley. Sir Antonio More was a native of Utrecht.

Richardson and Sir James Thornhill were the two most conspicuous native artists of the reign of George I.; and Hudson, the last on the list of degradation, was the pride of his day under that of George II. and the early part of the reign of George III.*

The first native artist of original genius who appeared to grace the annals of British art was Hogarth — the inimitable Hogarth; but why the pages of those annals had so long remained undignified by any name of similar note, must still remain a matter of speculation. We have briefly alluded to the advantages which different periods of our history presented to the English painters; and, if these have been much fewer in number, and for the most part less calculated to raise the character of art than the advantages enjoyed by other nations, they must still be allowed to have been fully sufficient to elicit more talent than we find to have resulted from them, under all the impediments by which they were attended, and by which they were so repeatedly checked.

With Hogarth flourished Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Wilson; names calculated to adorn the page of any record of art, at any period in which art has flourished. They will be venerated, while genius is thought worthy respect, in every portion of the civilised world. But,

* Jervais — more conspicuous from the eulogy of Pope than from his ability as an artist — was the competitor of Richardson, but very inferior to him.

if Hogarth, and Gainsborough, and Wilson had been the only great painters which England could boast of, in what may be called the infancy of its genuine art, that art would have never attained the perfection to which it has at this time arrived. It was the genius of Reynolds which matured it, and the influence of that genius has not only been felt in the range of his peculiar department; it has extended itself to every branch of the art, to the breast of every painter of talent or feeling.

The knowledge which English artists had acquired before the appearance of Reynolds may be said to have been gained through the Flemish school, and in the practical parts of the art they could scarcely have had a better guide; but their efforts had been confined to individual representation, they had learnt how to paint, but not how to think. They transferred the object before them to the canvass by an almost mechanical operation, and may be said to have painted the body, without reference to the soul, of the sitter. In proportion as the intellectual parts of art are neglected, the art itself must of necessity degenerate; and he who does not think of improving what he sees, will soon be unable to come up to it. British artists had to learn how nature might be elevated, and how to combine refined taste and poetical feeling, with the executive parts of the art. They could not be expected to infuse into their pictures a feeling which they did not possess, or which, if they possessed, they had at least never thought of applying to the purposes of their profes-

sion. They may be said to have painted with no other object than that of being paid for a copy of the features and dress of the individuals represented on their canvasses; and their sitters appeared to have no other idea on the subject than that of going down to posterity in the same wig and coat that they usually wore. The fancy of Lely occasionally operated on those who admired his pictures; and ladies sometimes chose, in imitation of their ancestors, to be painted as nymphs or as shepherdesses: but the change of dress was all that occurred to them, and the painter himself thought his portrait complete, when this part of his work was effected, or, if he aimed at the sublime of the pastoral, he added a dog or a sheep.

With such views of art, we cannot be surprised that painting degenerated in the hands of English artists; and that Reynolds, who could scarcely have imbibed any other in the early part of his brilliant career, should have found, on comparing the results of his labours with the works of Michel Angelo and Raphael, that it was necessary for him to "become *as a little child*," and recommence his studies upon principles with which he had been hitherto unacquainted. The power of his mind was equal to the task, and his steady perseverance enabled him at length to accomplish what his fine perception of excellence had made him feel to be necessary to his art, and eventually to raise the character of the British school to the rank in which he left it. His labours have not been without their effect on the minds and the works of his successors;

and the English school of painting may now be said to stand as proudly pre-eminent among those of the other parts of Europe, as it was previously obscure and degraded. Let it not be forgotten that it is chiefly to Reynolds that we are indebted for so important a change; and when we look on the partial defects of his works, let us view them as spots in the sun, which are lost in the splendour of the light that his genius has thrown far around us.

MEMOIR

OF

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

The children of genius have been often distinguished by remarkable eccentricities of character, and some of them, indeed, have been so little qualified to live in this world, as society is constituted, that nature appears to have dropped them by mistake into a sphere that was never intended for them.

At the same time, we have daily opportunities of observing that aberration of mind and constitutional or affected enthusiasm, habitual taciturnity, artfully accompanied by a well-practised air of superior sagacity, repulsive and unsocial habits, dictatorial manner, contempt of propriety, and other peculiarities equally frivolous, are often thought to be indicative of latent talent in persons of very ordinary calibre; while the quiet unassuming demeanour of many, who are really possessed of true genius, will occasionally be found to throw a veil over qualities which entitle them to the highest consideration. It may, consequently, be difficult, in seeking to form an estimate of character, where no decided proofs of undoubted ability have been given by which we might regulate our opinion, to distinguish between the genuine effusions of genius,

and the singularity of manner, or extravagance of conduct and sentiment, which may chance to be peculiar to the individual of whom we wish to judge. But the works of a man of talent will speak for themselves; and in these we cannot well be deceived. It is by his works that posterity will judge him, and it is to them that he should look for his fame, and the world for a proper criterion of his abilities.

Sir Joshua Reynolds had no real or affected peculiarities, which distinguished him from the plain English gentleman: he was subject to no fits of hysteric enthusiasm, asserted no undue pretensions, and thought nothing beneath his consideration which the rank that he held in society appeared to require at his hands. The history of his life will afford but little scope to those who look for romance as inseparable from genius, and think it unbecoming, in men of lofty minds, to climb to fame by a path which might be trodden by others. The course of Reynolds was not through the whirlwind or the torrent; no mystery attended his advance to superior excellence; it was planned on obvious but well-digested principles, and conducted with the steady perseverance of one who keeps his object always in view, and is determined eventually to reach it. His success in the art which he professed may be considered as the triumph of reason; for it was chiefly effected by observation and judgment; and though nature appears to have endowed him with an elegant and discriminative mind, yet it is probable that even for this he was greatly indebted to the habit of thinking with propriety, and of rejecting such ideas as he considered to be inconsistent with a dignified and comprehensive view of nature and things.

The records of art have not hitherto furnished us with so striking an example of what it is possible to

effect by a judicious use of other men's ideas, united with diligence and labour, as the history of the progress of Reynolds from the commencement to the close of his professional career. It will be found to afford a most instructive and encouraging lesson to the juvenile student in painting; and may contribute, perhaps, even more than the study of his works, to illustrate the means which Sir Joshua employed to dignify the art of his country, and to raise the proud structure on which he has based his well-merited claim to immortality.

Joshua Reynolds was a native of Devonshire, and was born at Plympton, July 16. 1723.* He was the son of the Rev. Samuel Reynolds and Theophila Potter his wife, and was the tenth of eleven children, five of whom died in their infancy.† It appears that

* This county has produced many other painters of note. Hudson, Hayman, Cosway, Humphry, Northcote, Haydon, Prout, were natives of Devonshire; and other names well known to the public might be added to the list. It is, however, remarkable, that the county which has been so prolific in artists, should have afforded, till very lately, fewer good collections of pictures than any other of equal dimensions in England.

† "His father had a notion," observes Malone, on the authority of Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, "that it might at some future period of life be an advantage to a child to bear an uncommon Christian name; which might recommend him to the attention and kindness of some person bearing the same name, who, if he should happen to have no natural object of his care, might be led even from so slight a circumstance to become a benefactor. Hence our author derived the scriptural name of Joshua, which, though not very uncommon, occurs less frequently than many others." But another biographer has suggested, with more appearance of reason, that it was probably given to him because an uncle, who was one of his godfathers, bore the same name, and it frequently happens that a child is christened after one of its sponsors. "It is certain," observes Northcote, who had seen the statements in Reynolds's handwriting, "that Sir Joshua had an uncle whose Christian name was Joshua, and dwelt at Exeter, and who was his godfather; but, not being present at the baptism of his nephew, was represented by Mr. Aldwin." In the Register of Plympton, how-

he was on every side connected with the church; for both his father and grandfather were in holy orders, his mother was the daughter of a clergyman, and his maternal grandmother the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Baker, an eminent mathematician noticed in the "Biographia Britannica;" his father's elder brother was also in the church, and was a fellow of Eton College, and a canon of St. Peter's, Exeter.

Mr. Samuel Reynolds is said to have been eminent for his learning; and united, with exemplary moral character, great innocence of heart and simplicity of manners: he appears to have been also a very absent man, and remarkable for habitual taciturnity. His mental powers, on Sir Joshua's authority, were considerably weakened, notwithstanding his advantages of education, from the circumstance of their not having been sufficiently confined to some determinate object; and were wasted in acquiring a general kind of knowledge, of little or no practical use to its possessor. The profits which he derived from the living of Plympton, and from the grammar-school of that place, which he conducted, were barely sufficient for the maintenance of his remaining six children; and as he was but ill calculated for the management of a school, the number of his scholars gradually diminished till one only remained on the establishment. This mortification appears to have been borne with good temper, and without any dejection of spirits; and he continued to enjoy the respect and esteem which the variety of his talents and the goodness of

---

ever, we find the name entered as Joseph; which inaccuracy we may conclude, with Malone, to have been occasioned by its having been written originally in an abbreviated form — Jos. son of Samuel Reynolds — and at a subsequent period entered erroneously by the clergyman or clerk of the parish.

his disposition had obtained for him from his friends and parishioners.

Young Reynolds is supposed to have been instructed in the Classics by his father, who is said to have been very assiduous in cultivating the minds of his children: but the attainments of Sir Joshua, in later years, do not seem to indicate that he profited much from instruction of a classical nature; and we may also conclude, that the mass of general knowledge by which he is allowed to have been distinguished, was chiefly acquired from long-continued intercourse with the most celebrated literary characters of his day, whom he loved to assemble around him. It has been erroneously stated, that his father intended him for the church; but it appears, on the authority of his own statement, that he was originally destined for the study of medicine: and he is known to have declared, at a more advanced period of life, that, if such had been the event, "he should have felt the same determination to become the most eminent physician, as he then felt to be the first painter of his age and country." It seems, indeed, to have been his constant and decided opinion, that "the superiority attainable in any pursuit whatever, does not originate in an innate propensity of the mind for that pursuit in particular, but depends on the general strength of the intellect, and on the intense and constant application of that strength to a specific purpose." He regarded ambition "as the cause of eminence, but accident as pointing out the means." Whatever may be the truth of these observations, they have certainly the authority of Johnson in support of them; and Reynolds himself was not in the habit of thinking superficially on subjects of any kind. But though it may be difficult to point out the limits of genius, and to say what a great

mind, under favourable circumstances, will not be able to effect for itself; yet, in granting that Reynolds might have made a good physician, a sound divine, or an eminent lawyer, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that Johnson would ever have made a good painter; and we cannot help thinking, that the artist, like the poet, must be born with certain capabilities for the acquisition of superior excellence in his art, which other men, not equally gifted, will find themselves unqualified by nature to attain. We do not here allude to Johnson's defect of sight, but to the total want of feeling for the art which he seems to have generally exhibited; and we have often seen men of superior ability, ranking high in other liberal professions, whom we should certainly judge to be disqualified by nature for excelling in that of painting. It may fairly be asserted, that without a strong determination to excel, unwearied application, and well-directed labour, no man ever acquired superiority in any difficult pursuit; but it is probable that Reynolds and Johnson, who profited so greatly by these advantages, and well knew how much could be effected by them, were inclined to think less of the assistance of nature, in proportion as they felt the true value of mental and personal exertion.*

An inclination for the art began to show itself in

* We think that we could point out many instances, where artists of eminence and undoubted ability in their profession have been prevented from attaining a higher degree of excellence, from the want of natural qualifications. No man ever took greater delight in his profession, or studied and practised it with greater diligence and assiduity, than West. No man ever had the various resources of his art more completely under his command, or combined the results of theory and practice with greater precision, than he did. If study and enthusiasm could have made a great painter, they might reasonably have been expected to make one of West: yet we find that he never acquired a true feeling for colour, a fine perception of the beauty of form, or of that which constitutes grace; and that he generally failed in the delineation of character

Reynolds at a very early period of his life, and his efforts were encouraged by his father,—who was himself fond of drawings, and had a small collection of anatomical and other prints,—when they did not interfere with his studies.* His first essays are said to have been copies from drawings done by his sisters, who had also some turn for the art; and he afterwards copied such prints as he chanced to meet with among his father's books, particularly those in Dryden's Plutarch; but his richest store was Jacob Catt's book of emblems, which his grandmother, a native of Holland, had brought with her from that country. At eight years of age he read with great avidity the "Jesuits' Perspective," which chanced to lie on the window-seat of his father's parlour; and made himself so completely master of it, that he never afterwards had occasion to study any other treatise on the subject. The first effort which he made towards reducing the rules thus acquired to practice, was a drawing of the grammar-school at Plympton, which, being raised on stone pillars, afforded a good subject for illustration; and in this he succeeded so well, that his father, on seeing it, is said to have exclaimed, "Now this exemplifies what the author of the 'Perspective' asserts; that, by

---

and expression, when his subject required that they should be of an elevated nature. It must, however, be remembered that the talents of West made ample amends for the deficiencies of nature. His knowledge of the art was profound and extensive, and few have equalled him in taste and facility of execution. He may truly be said to have raised the character of historical painting in this country to a height which British artists had not previously been qualified to attain.

* Malone tells us that Lady Inchiquin (afterwards Marchioness of Thomond) had one of these very early essays;—a perspective view of a bookcase, under which Mr. Reynolds had written,—"Done by Joshua, out of pure idleness." It is on the back of a Latin exercise.

observing the rules laid down in his book, a man may do wonders,—for this is wonderful." He next proceeded to draw likenesses of the friends and relations of his family, with no inconsiderable success: but what appears to have most confirmed him in the love of the art, was the perusal of Richardson's "Treatise on Painting;" which so delighted and inflamed his mind, says Malone, "that Raphael appeared to him superior to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern times,—a notion which he loved to indulge all the days of his life."

Much importance can scarcely be attached to the early efforts of childhood in any pursuit, particularly in those which require but little exertion of the mind; and we cannot consider the inclination for drawing manifested by young Reynolds at this period as any proof of the existence of the germs of that superior excellence by which he was afterwards distinguished; but the attention which was paid by a boy of eight years old to the study of a work on so dry a subject as perspective, showed an effort of the mind which deserved to be encouraged, and Mr. Reynolds acted wisely in noticing it.

Having now received praise for his performances in art, sufficient to stimulate him to further exertions, and to give him some preference for that occupation which had obtained for him more distinction than his other acquirements, it may well be imagined that young Reynolds's mind was excited by the glowing description of the importance which Raphael had acquired among his enthusiastic countrymen; and we may reasonably presume that Richardson's treatise materially contributed to give him that ambition for distinction as an artist which continued to stimulate him throughout the rest of his life.

It is difficult to say how far the feeling which Sir Joshua possessed for his art would have influenced him in the study of any other profession, and how far the ability which he displayed in it might have been turned with advantage into another channel. His own opinion on the subject has already been stated; and Johnson's notion, that "true genius is a mind of large general powers accidentally determined to some particular direction," appears to have suggested or confirmed it. The point must still remain a matter of speculation, for there are no sufficient data on which to found a conclusion; yet Reynolds himself, as Northcote justly observes, "never meant to deny the existence of genius, supposing the term to denote a greater degree of natural capacity in some minds than others: but he always contended strenuously against the vulgar and absurd interpretation of the word, which supposes that the same person may be a man of genius in one respect, but utterly unfit for, and almost an idiot in, every thing else; and that this singular and unaccountable faculty is a gift born with us, which does not need the assistance of pains or culture, time or accident, to improve and perfect it."

A few extracts from Sir Joshua's admirable "Discourses" will convince us of the truth of Northcote's observations, and prove that it is only in the acceptation of the term that Reynolds differs with others on the subject of genius, of which he certainly never meant to deny the existence. That genius, without exertion and judicious cultivation, is sufficient for the attainment of excellence in any pursuit, there are few, we should imagine, who are hardy enough to maintain; but still, that nature does nothing to fit us more for one pursuit than another, is a point which, in our opinion,

still remains open, and which we think it would be difficult to establish by facts.*

As young Reynolds's propensity for his fascinating art continued to become daily more manifest, his father thought fit to gratify his inclination; and when he was little more than seventeen years old, placed him as a pupil under Hudson, who, though but an ordinary painter, was the most distinguished artist of that time.†

---

* "To speak of genius and taste as in any way connected with reason and common sense, would be, in the opinion of some towering talkers, to speak like a man who possessed neither; who had never felt that enthusiasm, or, to use their own inflated language, was never warmed by that Promethean fire, which animates the canvass and vivifies the marble. If, in order to be intelligible, I appear to degrade art, by bringing her down from her visionary situation in the clouds, it is only to give her a more solid mansion upon earth. It is necessary that, some time or other, we should see things as they really are, and not impose on ourselves by that false magnitude with which objects appear when viewed indistinctly, as through a mist." — *Discourse* 7.

"Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent, as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think.

"The greatest natural genius cannot subsist on its own stock: he who resolves never to ransack any mind but his own, will be soon reduced, from mere barrenness, to the poorest of all imitations; he will be obliged to imitate himself, and repeat what he has before often repeated." — *Discourse* 6.

"It is indisputably evident, that a great part of every man's life must be employed in collecting materials for the exercise of genius. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory. Nothing can come of nothing; he who has laid up no materials, can produce no combinations." — *Discourse* 2.

† Thomas Hudson was the pupil and son-in-law of Richardson, and "enjoyed for many years," says Lord Orford, in his "Anecdotes of Painting," "the chief business of portrait-painting in the capital, after the favourite artists, his master and Jervas, were gone off the stage; though Vanloo first, and Liotard afterwards, for a few years, diverted the torrent of fashion from the established profession. Still the country gentlemen were faithful to their compatriot, and were content with his honest similitudes, and with the fair tied

Whether from accident or design does not appear, but the day on which this inauguration took place was that which is devoted to Saint Luke, the patron saint of artists and art in the calendar of our Catholic predecessors; it was the 14th of October, in the year 1740. Mr. Cranch, a gentleman of small independent fortune, residing at the town of Plympton, and a friend of Reynolds's family, was instrumental in recommending this measure; and he lived long enough to see his early opinions justified respecting Sir Joshua's future excellence. In grateful remembrance of this favour-

---

wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which he bestowed liberally on his customers, and which, with complacency, they beheld multiplied in Faber's mezzotintos. The better taste introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds put an end to Hudson's reign, who had the good sense to resign the throne soon after finishing his capital work, the family piece of Charles Duke of Marlborough (about 1756). He died January 26. 1779, aged 78."

The completion of the head, in his portraits, appears to have been the extent of Hudson's abilities; for he was usually indebted to his assistants for placing it well on the shoulders, and finishing the drapery and other details. This office was for a long time performed, says Northcote, by one Vanhaaken; and Hudson, on the death of his assistant, "was driven almost to despair:" he was fortunate enough, however, to meet with another drapery-painter, named Roth, who, though not so expert as the former, was yet sufficiently qualified to carry on the manufactory.

"Hogarth seems to be of opinion" (we still quote the words of Northcote) "that Hudson was not the only painter of his time that was indebted to Vanhaaken for assistance in finishing portraits; for, on the death of this eminent drapery-painter, he produced a ludicrous caricature of Vanhaaken's funeral procession, containing a long train, composed of all the portrait-painters of the metropolis as mourners, and overwhelmed with the deepest distress."

"The genius of Hogarth was too great, and his public employment too little, to require the assistance of a drapery-painter; therefore he might safely point his satire at those who did."

Mortimer and Wright of Derby were pupils of Hudson: they were men of superior talent in other branches of the art, but were never even moderately successful in portraiture; and were indebted to their master for that heaviness of style alone, by which the execution of their pictures is for the most part distinguished.

able opinion, Reynolds, many years afterwards, had a handsome silver cup made with the view of presenting it to his judicious friend. Mr. Cranch's death prevented the act of gratitude; but Northcote, from whom we quote the fact, had often seen the cup at Sir Joshua's table.

The terms of the agreement with Hudson were, that, provided he approved of his pupil, young Reynolds was to remain four years with him, but might be discharged before that period at his master's pleasure: our young artist was accordingly sent up to London, and on the 18th of October was introduced to his future preceptor. He was employed for some time by Hudson in copying the drawings of Guercino,—a task which he performed with such skill, that "many of these early productions are now preserved in the cabinets of the curious in this kingdom, and most of them are actually considered as originals by that master."* Hudson has been blamed for adopting this mode of instruction, and probably not without reason; but correctness of eye was at any rate acquired by his pupil, from the practice of copying drawings; and it may reasonably be presumed that young Reynolds was somewhat deficient in this respect when he first began his studies under a master.

It is evident, however, from the progress that he quickly made in painting, that he did not waste too much time on inferior objects; and Hudson was so far from being dissatisfied with his improvement, that, on seeing the portrait of an elderly female servant of the family, which Reynolds had painted, he is said to have been jealous of the rising talent, and to have predicted the future success of his pupil. This picture, having

* Northcote's Memoirs of Sir Johsua Reynolds.

been afterwards accidentally seen among the portraits in Hudson's gallery, obtained so universal a preference over them, that the jealousy which a first view of the work had excited, was materially strengthened by this unfavourable competition; and the mortified professor, who had long been without a rival, could not calmly contemplate the possibility of finding one in the person of a juvenile proficient in the art, who had so lately applied to him for instruction. Under the influence of this feeling, he was not long in contriving a pretext for dismissing his too successful pupil, which he did on the following occasion: —

Reynolds had been told to take a picture to Vanhaaken, the drapery-painter; but, as the evening on which he was to have executed this commission turned out to be wet, he postponed his task till the following morning: the picture was, however, delivered at an early hour, and there were no reasonable grounds of complaint. But Hudson was determined to find fault: he told Reynolds imperiously, that he had disobeyed his orders, and insisted that he should leave him immediately. It was in vain that his pupil suggested the propriety of first writing to his father on the subject, who might otherwise think that he had committed some crime; the wounded pride of Hudson would admit of no delay, and Reynolds quitted him to remove to the house of an uncle, who resided in the Temple; and from thence wrote to his father, who, after consulting his neighbour Lord Edgecumbe (says Farington), directed him to come down to Devonshire. In later years, this escape from the trammels of bad taste and insipidity was considered by Sir Joshua as a favourable circumstance: he had remained two years with Hudson; and had acquired, in that period, a sufficient degree of practice to enable him to proceed

with some facility in his studies: but his performances were, for some time after he quitted his instructor, slightly tinctured with the defects of his style; and, had he remained longer, it is probable that he would have had much more to unlearn, and that the efforts which his superior feeling for the art induced him to make in shaking off the partial Gothicism of manner which he had acquired in the school of Hudson, would have been rendered more difficult in proportion to the time which he had remained under the influence of such a master. Some of the pictures which he painted at this period, appear to have been but very indifferent; "being carelessly drawn," says Northcote, "and frequently in common-place attitudes, like those of his old master Hudson, with one hand hid in the waistcoat, and the hat under the arm,—a very favourite attitude with portrait-painters at that time, because particularly convenient to the artist, as by it he got rid of the tremendous difficulty of painting the hand. But one gentleman, whose portrait Reynolds painted, desired to have his hat on his head in the picture, which was quickly finished, in a common-place attitude, done without much study, and sent home; where, on inspection, it was soon discovered that, although this gentleman, in his portrait, had one hat upon his head, yet there was another under his arm. This picture," Northcote adds, "I never saw; but I have heard the anecdote so often repeated, and from such authority, that I apprehend it to be a truth."

While Reynolds was with Hudson, soon after his arrival in London, he was sent by his master to make a purchase for him at a sale of pictures; and as the collection was one of some consequence, the auction-room was uncommonly crowded. Reynolds was at the upper end of the room, close to the auctioneer, when

he observed a considerable bustle among the crowd at the other extremity, near the door, which he could only account for, at the moment, by supposing that some one had fainted from the effects of the heat. But he soon heard the name of Mr. Pope whispered from every mouth, for the poet was then entering the room. Every person drew back to make way for so distinguished a personage; and all those on either side of the passage which was formed for him, held out their hands that he might touch them as he passed. It chanced that Reynolds was not amongst the foremost, but he put out his hand under the arm of the person who stood before him, and Pope took it, as he did those of others in advancing. "This was the only time," says Northcote, from whom we quote the anecdote, and who had it from Sir Joshua himself, "that Reynolds ever saw that great moralist. Pity that Pope had not known the future importance of the hand which he then received in his own!"

We glean from this anecdote, in other respects comparatively trifling, an additional instance of that youthful enthusiasm and veneration for superior excellence which inspired young Reynolds, on a former occasion, with the exalted idea of Raphael that he is known to have retained through life. The admiration of talent in others is a powerful stimulus to an enterprising mind, and with Sir Joshua it proved a most active one. It led to a noble emulation, an ardent thirst for fame and distinction, which prompted him to look steadily forward to the objects of his ambition, and to delight in the exertion, however laborious, which brought him nearer to the end he had in view.

Such an impulse, once given, will never fail in its effect; it will raise the hand in youth, confirm it in manhood, and invigorate it under the infirmities of

age. The painter, who is inspired by the genius of Raphael, of Michel Angelo, Titian, and Correggio, cannot afford to relax in his exertions; and Reynolds, had he lived through centuries, would never have been satisfied with less than they possessed, so far as it was possible to apply what he could gain from them to the practice of his own line of art. His name will now be added to those which he venerated; and the student in painting who glows with emulation in contemplating his admirable works, may learn, from his experience, to appreciate the value of labour, and to depend with confidence on the result of that system which gave to England the founder of a new school of art, and to Reynolds a brilliant and a lasting reputation.

On leaving Hudson, Reynolds went back to Devonshire, where, as he afterwards told Mr. Malone, "he passed about three years in company from whom little improvement could be got;" and whenever he recalled this period of his life, he always spoke of it "as so much time thrown away,"—so, far at least, "as related to a knowledge of the world and of mankind,"—"of which," adds his biographer, "he ever afterwards lamented the loss." These remarks have furnished matter for discussion to the writers who succeeded Mr. Malone in the pleasing task of illustrating the life of Sir Joshua. "It is well known," observes Northcote, "that, during the period here spoken of, he produced a great many portraits, particularly one of a boy reading by a reflected light*, and several others which are undoubtedly very fine, as he himself acknowledged on seeing them at the distance of thirty years, when he

* This painting, fifty years afterwards, was sold by auction for thirty-five guineas. Some portraits of the noble family of Abercorn are also very correctly stated to have brought him into considerable notice at the above period.

lamented that in so great a length of time he should have made so little progress in his art. If it is true, therefore, that he really lamented his loss of time in that interval, it arose most probably from a regret that he had not sooner established himself in London, which he always considered as the proper field for the display of talent; and it was, besides, his early and fixed opinion, which might add to his uneasiness on the subject, that, if he did not prove himself the best painter of his time, when arrived at the age of thirty, he never should. At the period thus fixed upon by himself, there can be little doubt that he had at least surpassed all his competitors. At that interval of supposed negligence, I apprehend, he was still making his observations on what he saw, and forming his taste; and although there were but few works of art, as I have before noticed, within his reach in that country, still there were the works of one artist, who, notwithstanding he was never known beyond the boundary of the county in which he lived and died, was yet a man of first-rate abilities; and I have heard Sir Joshua himself speak of this painter's portraits, which are to be found only in Devonshire, with the highest respect: he not only much admired his talents as an artist, but, in all his early practice, evidently adopted his manner in regard to painting a head; and retained it, in some degree, ever after. This painter was William Gandy, of Exeter, whom I cannot but consider as an early master of Reynolds."

"Mr. Malone has observed," says another of Sir Joshua's biographers, "that Reynolds often spoke of this period as so much time thrown away, (so far, at least, as related to a knowledge of the world and of mankind,) of which he ever after lamented the loss. This surely," he continues, "must have been misun-

derstood by Mr. Malone. That he had not an earlier and a larger knowledge of the world was then of little importance to him, as he had undoubtedly enough for all useful purposes, especially as he must have associated with the best society that county afforded. But he had real cause to lament the want of a better education in his profession. The basis of all superior art is ability in drawing the human figure, and a knowledge of its anatomy. The valuable days of his youth, — the season when it is best, if not alone, acquired, — passed without his obtaining this, the most essential part of youthful study. The want of this acquirement he felt throughout his life; for, owing to this neglect, he never had professional strength to attempt to execute works which required great power of hand over form, without exposing his deficiency. Thus limited in professional preparation, he directed the whole force of his mind in the endeavour to carry to perfection that which he could do; and by whatever means he advanced in his art, it is certain that he did make considerable progress in colouring and effect before he left Devonshire to proceed to Italy."

Such are the observations of two of Sir Joshua's biographers, whose remarks are very justly entitled to our attention. But if we consider the means by which Reynolds advanced in his profession, and acquired so considerable a portion of general knowledge with very slender advantages of education, we shall probably be inclined to attach more credit to the assertion of Mr. Malone, than on a first view of the subject appears to be consistent with fact. He does not, indeed, appear to have felt the full force of Sir Joshua's remark; but his recollection of its general tenor (for his veracity cannot be doubted) is very likely, we think, to have been correct.

In looking back upon the period alluded to, and comparing it with more recent stages of his life, it is natural that Sir Joshua should have taken the view of it which Mr. Malone has attributed to him; and that in lamenting the time which he confesses to have lost, he actually regretted it "with reference to a knowledge of the world and of mankind;" and not to any neglect of the means which were afforded him of improving in the practice of his art. But the knowledge in question was not what is generally understood by a knowledge of the world and of mankind; for of that kind of knowledge, it is probable, as Mr. Farington remarks, that he had enough for all useful purposes. It was the want of proper employment for the mind, of which he did not then know the value, that Reynolds, in later years, may reasonably be supposed to have lamented; the want of the society of men of talent and learning, from whom he could have gained information, and acquired more enlarged and comprehensive views, and a more correct and refined taste, than he had the means of cultivating in Devonshire. Sir Joshua's mental acquirements were chiefly gained from observation, during the intercourse which he enjoyed with men of liberal minds and education; and notwithstanding the laborious exercise of his profession, in which he always steadily persevered, he found time and means to avail himself of their assistance in supplying his early deficiencies. He taught himself to think, as well as to paint, by making himself master of the thoughts of others; and so firmly was he persuaded that the labour of the mind is the most essential requisite in forming a great painter, that he constantly inculcates the necessity of it in his Discourses, and distinguishes it from that of the hand.

But what was the nature of the society which he was

likely to have met with in his native place, and what were the advantages which it may be supposed to have afforded? The country gentleman of Sir Joshua's time was not often qualified to give him much assistance in the cultivation of a neglected mind. What he could give was, no doubt, liberally afforded: a good day's hunting, shooting, or fishing, and an excellent dinner, at which to talk over the exploits and mishaps of those engaged in the sport, were probably never wanting to him in Devonshire, and seldom declined, we may reasonably conclude, by a youth of nineteen and twenty.

He does not indeed appear, under all these temptations, to have much neglected the practice of his profession; but it is probable that he did not look far beyond his palette and pencils, and did not much increase the slender stock of intellectual acquirements which he brought with him from the atelier of Hudson. He had not then the same views of art which he possessed in later years, and had no sufficient means of expanding his mind, so as to enable him to see his deficiencies and to take the best means of correcting them. The companion of Johnson and Burke well knew what he had gained from their society, and could appreciate the difference between what Malone has called "a knowledge of the world and of mankind," and the species of information which he gained during a three years' residence among country gentlemen.

We must, however, conclude, that at the period to which Sir Joshua adverted, he had not become acquainted with the family of the Mudges, by whose attainments he appears to have profited so much, and for whom he entertained a most sincere regard. This acquaintance must be reckoned, on the authority of Northcote, who owed much to the same family,

" among the earliest of his literary connections."—" I have myself heard Sir Joshua declare," he continues, " that the elder Mr. Mudge was, in his opinion, the wisest man he had ever met with in his life; and so great an admirer was he of the literary works of Mr. Mudge, that he had intended to have republished his sermons, which were out of print, and also to have written a sketch of his life and character."

The improvement which Sir Joshua had made in colouring previously to his departure for Italy, appears to have been chiefly derived from the works of William Gandy, which he had frequent opportunities of studying in Devonshire. " He told me himself," observes Northcote, " that he had seen portraits by Gandy that were equal to those of Rembrandt; one, in particular, of an alderman of Exeter, which is placed in a public building in that city. I have also heard him repeat some observations of Gandy, which had been mentioned to him, and which he approved of; one in particular was, 'that a picture ought to have a richness in its texture, as if the colours had been composed of cream or cheese, and the reverse to a hard and husky or dry manner.'"* Mr. Farington mentions having seen a much esteemed picture by Gandy, and is disposed to concur in the opinion, " that Reynolds might have imbibed, at an early age, a strong impression from studying the works of that artist; and that he carried with him to Italy a recollection of their peculiar solemn and forcible effect. Certainly," he adds, " some of the pictures which Reynolds painted while he was in Devonshire have a depth of tone and colour wholly unlike the flat and insipid pictures of the artists who were then most celebrated in London." A clever

* Many interesting particulars respecting this artist will be found in the supplement to Northcote's Memoirs of Sir Joshua.

portrait of himself, which represents him with his palette and pencils, and shading the light from his eyes, was painted at this time; the engraving is taken from it which forms the frontispiece to Northcote's Memoirs. At the same period he painted Miss Chudleigh, afterwards celebrated as Duchess of Kingston; and in a letter which he wrote to his father from the house which he had taken at Plymouth Dock, and where he resided with his two youngest unmarried sisters, he acquainted him, with some degree of exultation, that he had painted the portrait of the greatest man of the place — the commissioner of the dock-yard. But the picture which appears to have brought him most into notice at this period was a portrait of Captain Hamilton, now in possession, says Malone, of the Marquis of Abercorn; and there is a portrait of the same gentleman, with his children around him, a small family piece painted about the same time, in the collection of Lord Eliot, at Port Eliot in Cornwall. It was on seeing the first-mentioned portrait of Captain Hamilton, and that of the boy reading, painted at the same period, that Sir Joshua, thirty years afterwards, expressed regret at the little improvement he had made in the interval; and it is probable, that with his elevated conception of excellence he would have experienced the same feeling on reviewing the latest works which he painted, could he have lived to acquire a still farther proficiency in his art. His ardent mind was not formed to look with complacency on what he had already acquired; but he turned his eye steadily on those difficulties which he thought he had not yet subdued, and prepared to encounter them with the energy and the coolness of a long-practised champion in art. Secure of the advantages already obtained, he dismissed them in turn from his attention; and, while

any single object remained to be contended for, he attacked it as if it had been worth all the rest. The possession of the world could not satisfy the ambition of Alexander; and when Reynolds had mastered all the existing difficulties of his art, he would himself have imagined new ones.

In less than two years after he quitted Hudson, young Reynolds lost an anxious and affectionate parent. His father died on Christmas-day, 1746, universally beloved and lamented.

Sir Joshua is known to have early imbibed the habit of thinking philosophically; and he made it a constant rule in later years not to allow himself to be affected by occurrences of comparatively trifling importance, or overcome by those which might reasonably have excited him. The philosopher, however, even though he be a stoic, is not necessarily devoid of the feeling which he seeks to conceal, and we cannot persuade ourselves that a shock of this nature was not very acutely felt, though its effects have not been noticed by Reynolds's biographers.

The ties of kindred are strong in more remote degrees of relationship; but those which bind parents and children have qualities peculiar to themselves. They cannot be drawn closer, for the range of human feeling will admit of no closer connection; and they cannot be loosened, for neither time nor circumstances can weaken the feelings by which they are cemented.

We could wish that Mr. Reynolds had been destined to rejoice in the well-earned and brilliant reputation that his son acquired in later years; but we have still the satisfaction of knowing, that he lived to see him reach a degree of eminence from which great results might reasonably be anticipated, and the ever partial

eye of a father may be rather suspected of extending than of diminishing the prospect held out to him.

During his residence at Plymouth Dock, Reynolds first became acquainted with the family of Mount Edgcumbe, who patronised him warmly, and not only employed him in his profession, but recommended him to the Honourable Augustus Keppel, then a captain in the navy, and afterwards Viscount Keppel. This officer was about to hoist his flag in the Centurion, to take command of a squadron, as commodore, which had been ordered to the Mediterranean. He was to carry out presents to the Dey of Algiers, and was empowered at the same time to demand restitution of the money which had been recently plundered out of the Prince Frederic packet by the corsairs. Captain Keppel was at this time fitting out at Plymouth Dock, and Mr. Reynolds very gladly availed himself of his earnest invitation to accompany him during part of the voyage. As the equipment of the squadron and the preparation of the presents were likely to occupy some time, the commodore had orders to proceed to sea immediately in the Centurion; and he sailed, accompanied by Reynolds, on the 11th May, 1749. To visit Italy, and Rome in particular, had long been the object of Reynolds's ambition: he was now nearly twenty-six years of age, and his successful employment in Devonshire had enabled him to set aside a sum which he thought might be sufficient for his purpose. Captain Keppel's invitation was therefore peculiarly well timed, and the opportunity which now offered itself was more favourable to our young artist's views than his most sanguine expectations could have anticipated. His voyage was made very agreeable to him by the attentions of the commodore, who treated him with the utmost kindness, and gratified his curiosity at

every place where the ship touched whenever an opportunity was afforded. The Centurion arrived at Lisbon on the 24th of May, where Reynolds saw a bull-fight and many grand religious processions. On the 9th of June the ship anchored at Gibraltar, and after a few weeks proceeded to Algiers, in execution of the orders of the admiralty. On arriving at Algiers, July 20th, Reynolds accompanied Captain Keppel on a visit of state to the Dey, to whom he was also introduced; and as the object of the mission was soon accomplished, through the spirited conduct of the youthful commodore, the vessel quitted the African coast, and sailed for Port Mahon in the island of Minorca.

"At Port Mahon," says Northcote, "the friendship of the commodore, as well as his own merit, soon introduced him to notice; and he was busily employed in painting the portraits of almost all the officers of the garrison and on the station, much to the improvement of his skill and fortune." General Blakeney, the governor, was particularly attentive to him, and insisted on his not being at any expense for quarters during the whole time of his residence in the island: he also pressed him in the most cordial manner to take his seat every day at the government table.

Reynolds was obliged to remain longer at Port Mahon than he originally intended, in consequence of an accident that might have proved fatal to him. His horse fell with him down a precipice, and his face was cut so severely, as to oblige him to keep his room for some time. It was on this occasion, Northcote observes, that his lip was so much bruised as to oblige him to have part of it cut off; and hence arose that apparent contraction which Mr. Edwards supposes to have been owing to his subsequent illness at Rome.

His recovery enabled him to put in execution his original plan of visiting Italy, and for a time he took leave of his friend the commodore, who had treated him during the whole of the voyage with the greatest kindness and attention, affording him the liberal use of his cabin and library, and introducing him, when in port, to the first circles in which he associated. Reynolds now took a passage to Leghorn, and from thence proceeded to Rome, there to realise the visions which inflamed his youthful mind when he read of Michel Angelo and Raffaelle.

"Rome," observes the author of the Lives of British Artists, in his spirited and entertaining account of Sir Joshua, "Rome, which is in reality to painters what Parnassus is in imagination to poets, was frequently present to the fancy of Reynolds, and he longed to see with his own eyes the glories in art of which he had heard so much; he desired to pay his homage to the princes of the profession, and profit, if possible, by studying their productions. A visit to the Sistine Chapel confers on an artist that kind of dignity which studying at a university bestows on a scholar; and one would imagine, from the importance attached to such a pilgrimage, that excellence in painting could be acquired like knowledge in Greek: but the power to remember is one thing, and the power to create is another."*

It may here be suggested, that Rome is, in fact, something more to the student in painting than an

* Cunningham's Lives of British Painters, p. 217. Mr. Cunningham has given us a very comprehensive and highly entertaining Life of Sir Joshua; but we shall frequently have occasion to combat the observations which he makes on the subject of art, and shall sometimes feel ourselves obliged to differ with him in his estimate of the personal character of Reynolds, of which we do not think that he has taken quite so liberal a view as the circumstances to which he has alluded will justify.

imaginary source of inspiration; it is a practical school for the study of art, and for those important branches of it, in particular, which alone can give it the intellectual value which constitutes its greatest attraction. Sir Joshua gained more from the Sistine Chapel than the empty distinction of having visited it: and if others have retired from it with no larger views of art than those with which they first may have entered it, the fault must be attributed to the weakness or the carelessness of the visitors, and not to the works which they contemplated.

We must also recollect, that the power of creating depends upon the power of remembering; invention is little more than a new combination of ideas already acquired, and he who has most enriched his mind with the stores of nature and of art will always have the most fertile and the readiest invention. Sir Joshua aptly applied the observation of Grotius to demonstrate the necessity of study:—"Nothing can come of nothing:" it must not be expected that the power of creating will come to an artist by instinct; ideas must first be laid up in the mind, before the ability of selecting and combining them, so as to give them the appearance of novelty and the powerful attraction of interest, can reasonably be expected to show itself: we may wait very long for inspiration, if there be no stock to draw upon for the display of it. At the same time, the *nature* of the matter collected is of quite as much importance as the habit of collecting it; and the best materials, where the powers of applying them are equal, will always produce the most valuable results.

If the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican, as long experience has taught us to believe, contain the finest examples of graphic art within their walls of which we have now any knowledge, can we wonder that the

artist who is in pursuit of excellence should seek it where he knows it will certainly be found; and may he not, without incurring the imputation of pedantry and ostentation, perform the pilgrimage to the shrines of his professional divinities, which is here so incautiously held up to ridicule? If dunces have come back from Italy to talk of what they were unable to comprehend, and paint dreams of perfection suggested to waking imbecility by the nightmare of a dense or disordered imagination, must the student who can bring to the study of excellence the power of imbibing and retaining it, with the laudable determination of exerting such ability to the utmost, be deterred from so rational and so profitable an indulgence by the fear of being confounded with ignorant and self-sufficient coxcombs in art? No man disliked the cant of criticism, or despised the pedantry of the schools, more than did Sir Joshua Reynolds; yet no one contended more strenuously for the necessity of studying the works of the great masters, and particularly those of the Roman and Florentine schools, than he did on every occasion; and though he did not persuade himself that excellence in painting could be acquired like a knowledge of Greek, yet he knew that the dignity and classic simplicity of art could nowhere be studied with greater advantage than at Rome, and that unless they were sought for and reduced to fixed principles they would not be acquired at all.

On his arrival at Rome, Reynolds lost no time in forwarding the objects of his journey. "He contemplated," says Northcote, "with unwearied attention and ardent zeal the various beauties which marked the styles of different schools and different ages; he sought for truth, taste, and beauty at the fountain head. It was with no common eye that he beheld

the productions of the great masters: he copied and sketched in the Vatican such parts of the works of Raffaelle and Michel Angelo as he thought would be most conducive to his future excellence, and by his well-directed study acquired, whilst he contemplated the best works of the best masters, that grace of thinking to which he was principally indebted for his subsequent reputation as a portrait painter. In attending more particularly to this, he avoided all engagements for copying works of art for the various travellers at that time in Rome, knowing that kind of employment, as he afterwards said in a letter to Barry, to be totally useless: 'Whilst I was at Rome I was very little employed by them, and that little I always considered as so much time lost.'"

Reynolds was too much occupied with his studies to bestow much attention upon epistolary correspondence; "but I think it not improper," continues Mr. Northcote, "to insert here the following letter, as the first sketch of one he sent to his friend and patron Lord Mount Edgcumbe, written with admirable simplicity of language, and rendered interesting from the elegant, grateful, and feeling mind it displays, as well as showing the absurdity of imputing some *others* to his pen.

"'TO THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD E——.

"'My Lord,

"'I am now, thanks to your lordship, at the height of my wishes, in the midst of the greatest works of art that the world has produced. I had a very long passage, though a very pleasant one. I am at last in Rome, having seen many places and sights which I never

thought of seeing. I have been at Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Algiers, and Mahon. The commodore staid at Lisbon a week, in which time there happened to be two of the greatest sights that could be seen had he staid there a whole year,—a bull feast, and the procession of *Corpus Christi*. Your lordship will excuse me if I say that, from the kind treatment and great civilities I have received from the commodore, I fear I have even laid your lordship under obligations to him on my account; since from nothing but your lordship's recommendation I could possibly expect to meet with that polite behaviour with which I have always been treated: I had the use of his cabin and his study of books as if they had been my own, and when he went on shore he generally took me with him, so that I not only had an opportunity of seeing a great deal, but I saw it with all the advantages as if I had travelled as his equal. At Cadiz I saw another bull-feast. I ask your lordship's pardon for being guilty of that usual piece of ill-manners in speaking so much of myself: I should not have committed it after such favours. Impute my not writing to the true reason: I thought it impertinent to write to your lordship without a proper reason, to let you know where I am, if your lordship should have any commands here that I am capable of executing. Since I have been in Rome I have been looking about the palaces for a fit picture of which I might take a copy to present your lordship with, though it would have been much more genteel to have sent the picture without any previous intimation of it. Any one you choose, the larger the better, as it will have a more grand effect when hung up, and a kind of painting I like more than little. Though perhaps it will be too great a presumption to expect it, I must needs

own I most impatiently wait for this order from your lordship.

"'I am, &c.

"'JOSHUA REYNOLDS.'"

This letter is certainly better felt than expressed; but it is fully sufficient to set aside the imputation to which Mr. Northcote alludes—that of Reynolds having been in early life very grossly illiterate. His style of correspondence was, however, much improved in later years; and with respect to the originality of his Discourses, which Johnson, or Burke was once suspected of composing, it has long ago ceased to be questioned. Indeed, as Farington observes, "there are competent judges now living, who well remember, that, when required to exert his colloquial powers, he spoke as well as he wrote, and clearly showed his ability for either purpose."

Young Reynolds found time while at Rome to write to several of his professional acquaintance in England, exhorting them to follow him, and adding—"that if it were possible to give them an idea of what was to be seen there, the remains of antiquity, the sculpture, paintings, and architecture, &c. they would think it worth while, nay, they would break through all obstacles, and set off immediately for Rome."

"Notwithstanding these expressions of general admiration," says Farington, "the mind of our artist, according to his own declaration, was not then sufficiently cultivated to enable him to appreciate, on a first view, the excellence of the sublime conceptions and grand execution displayed in the works of Michel Angelo and Raffaelle in the Vatican."

His impressions with respect to these performances, and the efforts which he subsequently made to acquire

a better feeling for art than he brought with him from England, are well described in the papers collected by Mr. Malone. "Among our author's loose papers," observes his biographer, "I have found some detached and unconnected thoughts, written occasionally, as hints for a Discourse, on a new and singular plan, which he appears, at a late period of his life, to have had it in contemplation to compose, and deliver to the Academy; and which he seems to have intended as a history of his mind, so far as concerned his art, and of his progress, studies, and practice, together with a view of the advantages which he enjoyed and the disadvantages he had laboured under in the course that he had run: a scheme from which, however liable it might be to the ridicule of *wits* and *scoffers*,—a circumstance of which, he says, he was perfectly aware,—he conceived that the students might derive some useful documents for the regulation of their conduct and practice. It is much to be regretted," continues Mr. Malone, "that he did not live to compose such a discourse; for, from the hand of so great and candid an artist, it could not but have been highly curious and instructive. One of these fragments relating to his feelings when he first went to Italy, every reader will, I am confident, be pleased with its insertion."

"'It has frequently happened,' says this great painter, 'as I was informed by the keeper of the Vatican, that many of those whom he had conducted through the various apartments of that edifice, when about to be dismissed, have asked for the works of Raffaelle, and would not believe that they had already passed through the rooms where they are preserved; so little impression had these performances made on them. One of the first painters in France told me that this circumstance happened to himself; though he now looks on

Raffaelle with that veneration which he deserves from all painters and lovers of the art. I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raffaelle had the same effect on him; or rather, that they did not produce the effect which he expected.

"'This was a great relief to my mind; and, on inquiring farther of other students, I found that those persons only who from natural imbecility appeared to be incapable of ever relishing these divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them.* In justice to myself, however, I must add, that though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raffaelle, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and the prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them as I was conscious I ought to have done was one of the most humiliating things that ever happened to me. I found myself in the midst of works *executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted;* I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed.

"All the indigested notions of painting which I had brought with me from England, where the art was at

* This remark has been occasionally understood to imply, that none but an imbecile person can be alive, at first sight, to the genius of Raffaelle; an assertion which few would be found to assent to, even on the faith of Sir Joshua's authority. But Reynolds clearly says, that "those persons only, who from natural imbecility appeared to be *incapable* of relishing these divine performances, *made pretensions* to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them," and affected emotions which they did not feel.

the lowest ebb,—it could not, indeed, be lower,—were to be totally done away with and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become *as a little child*. Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merits, and to admire them more than I really did. In a short time, a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a *false opinion of the perfection of art*, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world.

"The truth is, that if these works had really been what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to the great reputation which they have so long and so justly obtained."

We must not be surprised at the little admiration which a young English artist of 1749, unacquainted with the noble works of Grecian sculpture, and unpractised in the art of drawing, experienced in contemplating, for the first time, the dignified simplicity of Raffaelle. Had he received the same advantages of early education which the institution of the Royal Academy, and the perusal of his own invaluable discourses, have subsequently afforded to the student in art, the result would probably have been very different. But he had not been taught to look at nature in the abstract, and had never raised his mind to the contemplation of intellectual art. He not only found himself "in the midst of works executed upon principles with which he was unacquainted," but he had learned to consider other parts of the art of painting,

which he afterwards pronounced to be subordinate, as possessing the highest claims to excellence.

That Reynolds had not the feeling to appreciate the noble productions of the Vatican, when he came to be acquainted with the principles upon which they found their claims to admiration, is disproved by his subsequent opinion of them, by the influence which they had upon his style, and by the earnestness with which he recommends them to the constant attention of the student.

It was not the grandeur and simplicity of these performances which paralysed the feelings and the judgment of the English painter, but the medium through which they were conveyed to his eye, that at first sight prevented their effect upon his mind. He did not find them adorned with the splendour of colour, and robed in the majesty of Rembrandt's light and shade. Their first effect upon the eye was too weak to excite the strong feeling of admiration which he came prepared to indulge in, and which they are so truly calculated to excite, when viewed with reference to the dignity and sentiment displayed in them. He viewed them simply as pictures, and found them deficient in qualities, which he had been accustomed to consider as most essential to the perfection of a fine work of art—the attractions of colour and light and shade; perhaps, also, those of texture and painter-like execution, of which he had already begun to feel the beauties, and which he afterwards laboured so successfully to acquire in the works which he has left us to delight in.

He has since expressed a doubt whether these qualifications are consistent with the dignity of historic or poetic compositions, as embodied in the grand style of art, and seems inclined to the belief that they would

rather diminish than increase the importance of works of such description. The painter who could best have united all the qualities of the art was Titian; and he had, for the most part, too little of the imagination of Raffaelle to afford us so desirable an union of perfections. Yet if so much sublimity has been given by colour, with comparatively little assistance from design, and light and shade, to the picture of Peter the Martyr, we may perhaps found a hope of the possibility of greater success in an union of the qualities of Raphael and Titian, when exerted on subjects of a more extended and higher description, if human nature be capable of uniting them.

The dignified solemnity and highly impressive character of this performance depend almost exclusively upon the powers of colour, for the light and shade, or rather light and dark, of the picture result from local colour only, and the action, expression, and design of the figures, however well conceived and executed, are but secondary in contributing to the wonderful effect of the whole. The genius of colour has succeeded in exciting the emotions of pity and terror, which it is thought to have been the peculiar gift of design to call forth exclusively from the spectator; and the feeling so created is by no means inferior to any which Raffaelle or Michel Angelo have excited by the powers in which they excelled. *

It must, however, be recollected that in speaking of Venetian art generally, as contrasted with that of the Roman and Florentine schools, Sir Joshua does not

* The Cain and Abel, the Abraham and Isaac, and the David and Goliath, afford ample proofs of Titian's power of design, when inspired by the genius of the Roman school; but they are unfortunately so much injured by the damp that their effect of colour, though still admirable, is widely different from that which they presented originally.

include Titian in the list of those painters who have devoted themselves to what he terms the ornamental, or florid, style of painting; and we are led to infer that he considers the best works of this master as consistent, in point of colour, with the sublimity of intellectual art.*

"Having since that period," continues Sir Joshua, "frequently revolved the subject in my mind, I am now clearly of opinion that a relish for the higher excellences of the art is an acquired taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation and great labour and attention.

"On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness; as if it were expected that our minds, like tinder, should

* "For my own part," observes Reynolds, "when I speak of the Venetian painters, I wish to be understood to mean Paolo Veronese and Tintonet, to the exclusion of Titian; for though his style is not so pure as that of many other of the Italian schools, yet there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him, which, however awkward in his imitators, seems to become him exceedingly. His portraits alone, from the nobleness and simplicity of character which he gave them, will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank in this branch of the art."—*Discourse* iv.

Again, "It is to Titian we must turn our eyes to find excellence with regard to colour and light and shade in the highest degree. He was both the first and the greatest master of this art."

"Raffaelle and Titian are two names which stand the highest in our art; one for drawing, the other for painting."

"Raffaelle and Titian seemed to have looked at nature for different purposes; they both had the power of extending their view to the whole; the one looked only for the general effect as produced by form, the other as produced by colour."—*Discourse* xi.

We may add, what Sir Joshua has often remarked in other parts of his discourses, that sublimity, whether in colour or design, depends upon the power of generalising; and it is chiefly to the judicious exercise of this power that Titian is indebted for his great superiority.

instantly catch fire from the divine spark of Raphael's genius. I flatter myself that *now* it would be so, and that I have a just and lively perception of his great powers; but let it be remembered that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep, and at the first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style which strikes at once, and captivates the eye, for a time, without ever satisfying the judgment. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts. A just and poetical taste and the acquisition of a nice discriminative musical ear are equally the work of time. Even the eye, however perfect in itself, is often unable to distinguish between the brilliancy of two diamonds, though the experienced jeweller will be amazed at its blindness; not considering that there was a time when he himself could not have been able to pronounce which of the two was the most perfect, and that his own power of discrimination was acquired by slow and imperceptible degrees."

These remarks have been combated on the grounds that "true art is nature exalted and refined, but it is *nature* still;" and as the beauties of nature require only to be seen in order to be properly appreciated, so those of art, being identified with them, may be judged of, intuitively and correctly, without the necessity of any previous education to regulate the judgment of the spectator.

But we cannot agree that the beauties of nature require only to be seen in order to be felt, for we ourselves have known many who were not only incapable of appreciating them, but even of perceiving them when pointed out; and on occasions where admiration is really excited by the contemplation of objects in nature, if he who expresses it for that which, in his estimation, is characterised by sublimity

or beauty, should be ignorant of the causes which produce these qualities, he has no sufficient standard by which to judge of the correctness of his feelings, and may often be mistaken in the estimate which he has formed of the objects contemplated.

He who looks, with the eye of a painter, over an extensive tract of cultivated ground, lighted up with the brilliant or the glowing tints of sunshine, and rich in harmonious variety of colour, diversified by pleasing masses of shade, will view it with feelings of a very different nature from those which it would suggest under similar circumstances to the labourer, the farmer, or the squire. They could not feel the beauties which he would delight in, and he could not participate in those of their creation. "The lofty mountain" would be estimated, by the ordinary observer, simply in proportion to its height, without reference to the grandeur or the beauty of its form, to its advantages of colour, or solemnity of light and shade; "the mighty sea," by its power of doing mischief, and "the troubled sky," unless announcing a storm, which might be dangerous or inconvenient in its consequences, would probably excite no emotion at all. It seems to us that he who really can appreciate sublimity or beauty has already acquired, from whatever sources, the true feeling of a painter or a poet; and if they who maintain a contrary position be at any time properly affected by the contemplation of objects in nature, which are calculated to excite sublimity or beauty, they may reasonably be congratulated on the acquisition of more than they are themselves aware of.

If true art, as we freely allow, be nature exalted and refined, the painter must first understand the principles by which it is refined and exalted, before he can apply them, with adequate effect, in a tasteful or

dignified representation of it. These principles are founded upon general views of nature, and not upon any particular or accidental appearance of it; and he who has not been accustomed to generalise will not only be incapable of putting them in practice, but unable, at first, to comprehend them.

It was thus with Sir Joshua Reynolds: he had looked at nature only with a view of representing that which he saw before him, and had never thought of superadding ideal excellence to that which his limited observation suggested to him. To give a character of general interest to individual nature, without sacrificing any of its important peculiarities, is the most arduous task of a portrait painter; and Reynolds, after studying the works of Raffaelle, and making himself master of his generalising principles, was enabled to accomplish this object; which it is probable that he would never have contemplated if he had not enlarged his conception of art, and his views of nature, in the Vatican.

The principles which are applicable to character and expression may be equally applied to the general outline of objects, and are essential to its grace or its dignity: they extend to the tones and local colouring of a picture, to the light and shadow of each object separately, as well as to the arrangement of the masses of light and shade which give the general effect of the whole: there is nothing, in fact, which is uninfluenced by them in any part of a fine work of art; and nature, without generalising principles to regulate it, would be useless to the artist who aims at producing even a moderately well-conducted picture.

Some of these general principles are acquired in the course of practice by artists of common observation: but those on which the higher views of art depend

require the mind of the painter to be elevated to the standard of ideal perfection; and it is here that the study of abstract principles is more imperatively necessary. Michel Angelo, Raffaelle, and Titian, have carried them farther than any in the loftier ranges of art, and Reynolds, in his own peculiar department, has no competitor but Titian to contend with, whom, indeed, he has frequently surpassed.

The minds of Michel Angelo and Raffaelle were formed on the study of Grecian sculpture, and they took the views of nature, adapted to their peculiar dispositions, which the works of the ancients presented to them. Sir Joshua Reynolds had not this advantage: but he analysed the principles which he observed in the works of these two great masters, and which had previously been wholly unknown to him; and by his power of just discrimination, assisted by native, perhaps we must say by early acquired, good feeling, he formed the style which he applied to the practice of his art on the basis which they had erected for him.

That a taste for true excellence is the gift of nature, we repeat that we cannot persuade ourselves to imagine; and if we admit that some are gifted with the capacity of acquiring it much sooner than others, and that many appear to be disqualified by nature from ever acquiring it at all, we think that farther concession on this point cannot with reason be expected.

If the suggestions of nature were found to be invariably infallible, we should then, indeed, have reason to put implicit faith in them: but we know from experience that most of them are rather the results of ignorance than of sound discrimination; and if all our independent or unacquired feelings must be received as the gifts of nature, and on that account pronounced to be infallible, we shall have the same authority for ridi-

culous fancies as for the most unerring conclusions, and taste and caprice will have equal pretensions to orthodoxy.

In the absence of some definite standard by which to judge of the propriety of our feelings, we must take our ideas on trust, and leave it to be determined by experience whether they may chance to be true or false; and the result of such a system would probably be that we should spend a whole life in the pursuit of knowledge which a few years, perhaps, would suffice to attain, or which it might happen that we should never acquire at all.

Reynolds had the good sense to doubt the correctness of those impressions which a first view of Roman art suggested to his inexperienced mind. He submitted them to the test of laborious examination, and found them eventually to be wrong. Yet it was not that he actually thought differently from Raphael in his estimate of the causes of true dignity in art; but that he had hitherto been accustomed to take nature as he found it, and had not yet attempted to raise its ordinary scale from individuality, or accidental appearance, to that of ideal perfection, founded on a more comprehensive view of it than he had ever contemplated the existence of: his reading of nature had been limited, and the epic of his art was unknown to him.

He had to search for feelings which had never been excited; to ruminate on the value of beauties which, till then, had escaped his notice, — beauties which were not so much in decided opposition to those which he had previously admitted and appreciated, as they were higher in quality, and dependent on other causes for their value.

When Sir Joshua asserted that "a relish for the higher excellences of art is an acquired taste, which

no man ever possessed without long cultivation, and great labour and attention," he was himself an admirable example of the truth of what he advanced; and had never been able to discover the individual, or to hear of his existence through others, who had confessed and appreciated the merit of Raffaelle without much previous study of his works, or of others which were founded on the same principles as those which that great master adopted. We have no reason to doubt his sincerity; and till others can prove, on better grounds than have yet been advanced, that good taste is the offspring of chance, we have no sufficient cause to doubt the truth of his assertion.

"The man of true genius," continues Sir Joshua, "instead of spending all his hours, as many artists do while they are at Rome, in measuring statues and copying pictures, soon begins to think for himself, and endeavours to do something like what he sees. I consider general copying," he adds, "as a delusive kind of industry: the student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and labouring without a determinate object: as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work; and those powers of invention and disposition which ought particularly to be called out and put into action lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise. How incapable of producing any thing of their own those are who have spent most of their time in making finished copies, is an observation well known to all those who are conversant with our art."*

* "Of the few copies which Reynolds made while at Rome two are now," says Malone, "in the possession of the Earl of Inchiquin, who married his niece, Miss Palmer,—St. Michael the Archangel slaying the Dragon, after Guido, and the School of Athens, from Raffaelle,—both admirable performances."

"From contemplating the works of Titian, Coreggio, &c.," he says in another of his fragments, "we derive this great advantage,—we learn that certain niceties of expression are capable of being executed which otherwise we might consider as beyond the reach of art; this inspires with some degree of confidence, and we are thus excited to endeavour at other excellences in the same line."

"Some account of Reynolds's particular practice and habits of study while he was in Italy is, I know," observes Mr. Malone, "much desired by several artists of the present day, but these I have no means of investigating. The method which he employed while at Venice, in order to ascertain the principles on which the great masters of colouring wrought, and to attain the true management of light and shade, he has himself particularly mentioned in a note on Du Fresnoy's poem."

We may, however, collect, from what we know of the method of study, as well as from the writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that it was chiefly to the habit of reasoning upon what he observed in the works of the ancient masters, with a view of establishing fixed and definite principles for the regulation of his future practice, that he was indebted for the extensive mass of general information which he had evidently acquired on the subject of his art.

In the works which he contemplated he studied the mind rather than the peculiarities of the painter, and endeavoured to think as the great masters thought, rather than to imitate their mode of expressing themselves.

When by frequent and laborious observation and comparison he had formed his own idea of what true art consisted in, he had recourse to nature herself,

who, as he remarks, "is always at hand, and in comparison of whose true splendour the best coloured pictures are but faint and feeble."

"The artist," he observes, "who has his mind filled with ideas, and his hand made expert by practice, works with ease and readiness; whilst he who would have you believe that he is waiting for the inspirations of genius is in reality at a loss how to begin, and is at last delivered of his monsters with difficulty and pain. The well grounded painter, on the contrary, has only maturely to consider his subject, and all the mechanical parts of his art will follow without his exertion."

The mode of study which Sir Joshua adopted himself he continually recommends to the students.

"Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions: instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road; labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking; possess yourself with their spirit; consider with yourself how a Michel Angelo or a Raffaelle would have treated this subject, and work yourself into a belief that your picture is to be seen and criticised by them when completed; even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers."

"But as mere enthusiasm will carry you but a little way, let me recommend a practice that may be equivalent to, and will, perhaps, more efficaciously contribute to your advancement than even the verbal corrections of those masters themselves, could they be obtained: what I propose is, that you should enter into a kind of competition, by painting a similar subject, and making a companion to any picture that you consider as a model. After you have finished your work, place it near the model, and compare them carefully together: you will then not only see but feel your own deficiencies more

sensibly than by precepts or any other means of instruction. The true principles of painting will mingle with your thoughts. Ideas thus fixed by sensible objects will be certain and definitive; and, sinking deep into the mind, will not only be more just but more lasting than those presented to you by precepts only, which will always be fleeting, variable, and undetermined."

"We all must have experienced how lazily, and, consequently, how ineffectually, instruction is received when forced upon the mind by others. Few have been taught to any purpose who have not been their own teachers. We prefer those instructions which we have given ourselves from our affection to the instructor; and they are more effectual from being received into the mind at the very time when it is most open to receive them."

"A painter should form his rules from pictures rather than from books or precepts: rules were first made from pictures, not pictures from rules. Every picture an artist sees, whether the most excellent or the most ordinary, he should consider from whence that fine effect or that ill effect proceeds; and then there is no picture ever so indifferent but he may look at to his profit."

We may glean from the spirit of these observations the nature of the method of study which Reynolds considered to be the most efficacious. He was evidently of opinion that the whole power of the mind should be kept in constant action; and that the mechanical parts of the art, though necessary for the expression of the more intellectual ones, should always be secondary considerations. That more can be learned from studying the mind of the painter whom we take as a model than by copying any number of his pictures, and that unless what we acquire from him can be reduced to

fixed principles, so as to be rendered available on all occasions, we have not studied his works with good effect.

At the same time it is evident that while he studied the principles he did not neglect the executive parts of the art, so far as his previous education, in which we have already observed that design was much neglected, would enable him to acquire them. It was too late in life to commence academical studies without losing much valuable time; and as he had already made considerable progress in portraiture, he judged it more expedient, as well as more practicable, to endeavour to perfect himself in that branch of the art rather than to engage in another for the study of which he was wholly unprepared.

Here the power and the energy of his mind were displayed with unexampled effect: he could not, under existing circumstances, enter the lists with Michael Angelo and Raphael in their own comprehensive departments, but he formed the bold idea of applying the principles by which those great masters acquired immortality, to the elevation of his own branch of painting, and determined to infuse the spirit of intellectual art into the representations of individual nature.

He has proved himself equal to the task which his sound discrimination and indefatigable perseverance enabled him to conceive and to execute, and has given a higher interest and a more extended range to portraiture than any of the greatest masters who preceded him.

Having formed his noble project, he applied himself diligently to collect the materials for its accomplishment: he not only studied the means of giving dignity and expression to his heads, without sacrificing the

characteristic peculiarities of his sitters, but the principles also by which those distinctions might be placed in the strongest and most effective points of view.

Where the power of design was most essential to his object, he acquired it in an admirable degree, and no painter ever drew the head with more taste and decision than Reynolds.

In the works of Titian, and Corregio, and occasionally in those of Velasquez, he studied the principles of colour and light and shade which the Roman school could not afford him, and in these points still adhered to the generalising principles which Raffaelle and Michel Angelo applied to design. He has thus been very frequently enabled to give a character of interest to his subjects where design was unable to supply it, and materially to increase the interest of such as design had already made attractive.

In the air of his figures, the character of his draperies, the arrangement of his back-grounds, and the general disposition of his pictures, he still kept in view the great object of his laborious researches, and applied the same principles to regulate them which had influenced other parts of his practice. He never turned aside from the broad path to excellence, which the works of the great masters first pointed out to him, to loiter in the mazes where others have bewildered themselves, who knew not the value of time, or the importance of genuine art. We know not whether most to admire his perseverance, or the greatness of the objects to which it was directed; and when we are told that he has left but few memorials of the manner in which he employed his time in Italy, we overlook the great mass of dignified and comprehensive art which displays to us so clearly, in the subsequent works of his pencil, the objects to which his study of the works

which he saw there was directed, and the means which he took to accomplish them.

If *more* had been essential it would not have been wanting: but the employment of the mind, rather than of the hand, was that by which Reynolds profited in Italy; for he was sufficiently advanced in the executive parts of the art before he applied himself so closely to its theory, and he did not think the practice of copying was necessary for any other purpose than that of acquiring a facility of execution, and a certain degree of confidence in colouring.

It has occasionally been remarked that Sir Joshua Reynolds devoted himself to one line of practice, and recommended another to the students in his discourses; that he was loud in the praises of Michel Angelo and Raphael, the great founders of historical art, and was himself content to labour in an humble department which had but little alliance with the object of his urgent recommendation; that he carried on a sort of manufactory of faces by which he gained a considerable income, and exhorted young artists to waste their time and their means in the pursuit of chimerical excellence, and in the practice of a department of art uncongenial with the taste of the country, by which they must necessarily starve; that many a good painter of domestic life, who might have gained wealth and fame in the style of art which was patronised, became the victim to Sir Joshua's ill-judged observations, and spent a wretched life in painting bad historical pictures instead of following the natural bent of his own inclination and the current of the national taste; that he lavished instruction with a liberal hand where it tended to forward a neglected and unprofitable department of painting, and withheld from the student the mysteries of portraiture,

and the secrets by which he himself acquired excellence in the practice of a lucrative profession.

Of all the charges which have been brought against the talented and liberal-minded artist who released us from the shackles of gothicism, and laid the foundations of that school of art which now stands the highest in Europe, we think these are the most inconsistent. If any man had reason to speak in praise of intellectual art, to which he owed his fame and his fortune, it surely was Sir Joshua Reynolds; and if any school of painting ever needed such instruction as advocate for Roman art is charged with instilling, it was certainly that of Kneller, and Jervais, and Hudson.

That Reynolds was the champion of qualities in art which did not influence his peculiar department of painting, and which cannot be successfully employed in the comparatively inferior ranges of the profession, appears to us inconsistent with fact; and when we look at what he painted before he went to Italy, and compare his works of that period with his subsequent productions, there are ample grounds for judging that it is so. We could not doubt the sources whence he drew the magic power which converted the pupil of Hudson into the successful competitor of Titian and Velasquez, and the victor of Rubens and Vandyke, when viewed as his opponents in portraiture or in the dignified simplicity of general art, if he had even neglected to unveil them in his writings. It is by no means incumbent on those who form their taste on the works of Michel Angelo and Raffaelle to devote themselves exclusively to that style of art in which those great masters excelled; and it is clear that the expansion of mind which must result from a diligent and well-directed study of them will enable the painter to add greater interest, greater power, and greater originality,

to subjects of limited importance than less extended views of his professional resources could enable him to dream of attempting.

But, to take other grounds—if the vain or the unthinking student should mistake the proper range of his capacity, experience will shortly convince him of his error; and if it should even fail to do so, there is no sufficient reason why those of greater powers should be debarred from the means of instruction which his weakness prevented him from turning to advantage. As president of the Royal Academy, it was the duty of Sir Joshua Reynolds to give the preference to the highest style of art; and, so far from being wrong in adopting such a course, he would have been culpable in omitting to do so; especially as that department had been so little cultivated in England, and was more necessary than any other for the reformation of the miserable taste which had grown up and prospered in the hands of his predecessors. But he did not urge the practice of historical painting so much as the principles by which it is best regulated; knowing, as he did, that those principles were more or less applicable to every department of the art, and that none could be injured by learning to divest themselves of erroneous and contracted views of their profession.*

* That Sir Joshua did not recommend indiscriminately the study of the grand style of art, we mean that he did not urge every student to undertake the highest departments of painting, the following observations will suffice to convince us: —

"I wish you to understand that I do not discourage the younger students from the noble attempt of uniting all the excellences of art; but suggest to them, that, besides the difficulties which attend every arduous attempt, there is a peculiar difficulty in the choice of the excellences which ought to be united. I wish you to attend to this, that you may try yourselves, whenever you are capable of that trial, what you can, and what you cannot do; and that, instead of dissipating your natural faculties, over the immense field of possible excellence, you may choose some par-

We cannot ourselves perceive the advantage which the English school of painting would have derived from Sir Joshua's instructions, if, instead of recommending what it was desirable that it should acquire, he had fostered the failings of national prejudice, and taken no steps to amend them.

When Reynolds first began to distinguish himself, he had to contend with a strongly rooted prejudice in favour of the tasteless and degraded style of art which had flourished under the disciples of Kneller, and with which he was not himself untainted before he enlarged his conceptions in Italy. But the power of true art eventually prevailed; and the vitiated taste of the public rose in proportion to the efforts which he made to create a better feeling by the works of his pencil.

It was not the taste of the age that called forth the genius of Michael Angelo or of Raphael; it was the power of their exertions in the pursuit of superior excellence which raised the character of the national feeling, and formed the taste which appreciated the value of their labours.

If we conclude that there is little taste in England for works of an elevated character, it is assuredly incumbent on the head of a public institution, which professes to encourage and promote the higher departments of the art, to endeavour to raise the popular standard, and to point out the value of that excellence which may have failed to meet with proper encourage-

---

ticular walk in which you may exercise all your powers, in order that each of you may become the first in his way.

"If any man shall be master of such a transcendent, commanding, and ductile genius as to enable him to rise to the highest and to stoop to the lowest flights of art, and to sweep over all of them unobstructed and secure, he is fitter to give example than to receive instruction."—*Discourse* v.

ment. It is his duty to stimulate the rising generation to prove by their works that they are capable of excelling in a pursuit which is deserving of national encouragement, and to show that it is not in the incapacity of the painter that we must look for the cause of the alleged neglect. To say that the attempt is an arduous one is certainly an excuse for not making it, but not a sufficient justification. Important results are but seldom obtained without great and continued exertions; and till these have been made, and steadily persevered in without any obvious effect, there are no sufficient grounds for despair.

There will always be instances of bad taste and feeling among those who are unacquainted with genuine art: but we do not ourselves believe in the existence of a national prejudice against historical painting in England; and we think that the want of encouragement under which it has too often laboured must be attributed to other causes than those of public incapacity to appreciate it.

The works of Reynolds did much to improve the public taste, and their beauties will continue to operate upon it while time and bad picture-cleaners spare them: but the foundation of the Royal Academy was the most important step which had been taken for the advancement of historical art; and Sir Joshua was called upon by the duties of his office to assist in giving the necessary stimulus to exertions which might be calculated to advance it still farther: his discourses are admirably adapted to give the impulse to art and public feeling which was wanting, and the works of his pen have been perhaps as effectual as those of his elegant pencil. Public taste, we repeat, has been considerably improved by the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds; as it has shown itself on many recent occasions fully

capable of appreciating intellectual art, so we doubt not, if the artist persevere in his exertions, that they will be estimated in proportion to the advances which he makes.

With respect to the mysteries of portrait painting, which Reynolds is accused of withholding from the students, and the secrets by which he himself acquired wealth and rose to eminence in his profession, they are those very principles which he is charged with instilling into the humble painters of domestic life, who might, but for them, it is presumed, have made their fortunes by working only to the level of the national taste. They are the mysteries of Raphael, of Titian, and Correggio, and the secrets of observation, comparison, and labour, which Reynolds employed to unravel them. Till the art of excelling, as Sir Joshua did in portraiture, shall be found to depend upon a species of juggling, there will be no other secrets by which a painter can rise to that high degree of excellence in art which he attained.

The trickeries of art, if we may use the expression, and there are means of such a description in painting, and Reynolds has frequently emplōyed them, will never advance the artist a step in the more important parts of his profession. If Sir Joshua directed the student to the sources from which he himself derived excellence, it cannot be said that he withheld from them the means by which he was enabled to acquire it; and that he did so direct them, to the best of his ability, the perusal of his admirable discourses will be fully sufficient to prove. He knew from experience that the mechanical intricacies of painting would be acquired in the course of practice; and his great object was to turn the mind of the student to the acquisition of excellences in art which a limited view of its re-

sources would never enable him to attain. He considered that a careful and diligent study of the works of the greatest masters was the most effectual, as well as the shortest, method of accomplishing the object proposed to them; and he explained to them clearly and repeatedly how this mode of study could be pursued with the greatest facility and advantage.

In his last discourse he confesses, with the unaffected modesty of merit, how unequal he had been to the expression of his own ideas: "to this work, however," he adds, "I could not be said to come totally unprovided with materials; I had seen much, and I had thought much upon what I had seen; I had something of a habit of investigation, and a disposition to reduce all that I had observed and felt in my own mind to method and system: but I thought it indispensably necessary well to consider the opinions which were to be given out from this place, and under the sanction of a Royal Academy; I therefore examined not only my own opinions, but likewise the opinions of others."

"In reviewing my discourses, it is no small satisfaction to be assured, that I have in no part of them lent my assistance to foster *newly-hatched, unfledged* opinions, or endeavoured to support paradoxes, however tempting may have been their novelty, or however ingenious I might, for the minute, fancy them to be; nor shall I, I hope, any where be found to have imposed on the minds of young students declamation for argument, a smooth period for a sound precept. I have pursued a plain and *honest method;* I have taken up the art simply as I found it exemplified in the practice of the most approved painters. That approbation which the world has uniformly given, I have endeavoured to justify by such proofs as questions of this kind will

admit; by the analogy which painting holds with the sister arts, and consequently by the common congeniality which they all bear to our nature. And though in what has been done no new discovery is pretended, I may still flatter myself, that from the discoveries which others have made from their own intuitive good sense and native rectitude of judgment," in allusion to the works of the old masters, "I have succeeded in establishing the rules and principles of our art on a more firm and lasting foundation than that on which they had formerly been placed."

With this mode of instruction, brought forward and delivered on the authority of such an artist as Sir Joshua Reynolds, we confess that we are perfectly satisfied; and we think that when it is calmly and fairly weighed, it will be equally satisfactory to others. If any man were competent to decide upon the method of study most conducive to the advancement of students in painting, it was surely the artist who pretended to no inspiration, and had risen from comparative mediocrity to excellence by the judgment with which he instructed *himself.* The critic in art may doubt his capacity for the task, or the sincerity with which he delivers his opinions, without incurring any other risk than that of being thought very singular; but the artist who has not yet determined on his method of study, and is ambitious of acquiring distinction in his profession, cannot slight the well-considered observations of Reynolds without incurring great danger of never succeeding in the object of his youthful ambition.

The following observations which Northcote had seen in Sir Joshua's own handwriting, and which appear to be written while at Rome as hints for his future practice, may not be uninteresting or unprofitable to young artists, and will serve to prove that, while

diligently employed in cultivating the higher excellences of his art, Reynolds did not neglect its details.

"The Leda in the Colonna palace, by Correggio, is dead-coloured white, and black or ultramarine in the shadows; and over that is scumbled, thinly and smooth, a warmer tint, I believe caput mortuum. The lights are mellow, the shadows bluish but mellow. The picture is painted on a panel in a broad and large manner, but finished like an enamel: the shadows harmonise and are lost in the ground.

"The Ecce Homo of Correggio in the same palace. The shadows are entirely lost in the ground; perhaps more so by time than they were at first.

"The Adonis of Titian in the Colonna palace is dead coloured white, with the muscles marked bold: the second painting he scumbled a light *colour* over it; the lights a mellow flesh-colour; the shadows, in the light parts, of a faint purple hue; at least they were so at first. That purple hue seems to be occasioned by blackish shadows under*, and the colour scumbled over them.

"I copied the Titian in the Colonna collection with white, umber, minio, cinnabar, black; the shadows thin of colour." Perhaps little more than the dark ground left.

"In respect to painting the flesh tint, after it has been finished with very strong colours, such as ultramarine and carmine, pass white over it, very thin with oil. I believe it will have a wonderful effect.

"Or paint carnation *too red*, and then scumble it over with white and black.

* Probably a dark red ground, which Titian frequently employed; and which in showing itself through a white preparation, as above stated, would take the hue alluded to. Such a ground is afterwards mentioned as having been employed by Poussin.

"Then," he adds, "dead colour with white and black only; at the second sitting, carnation. (To wit, the Barocci at the palace Albani, and Correggio in the Pamphili.)*

* All these modes of preparation were afterwards employed by Sir Joshua, who generally made out his shapes, as well as the light and shadow of his heads, in little more than blue black, and white, or lake, blue-black, and white (sometimes lake and white only), using always in this stage of the picture a good body of colour; over this, when dry, he scumbled yellow ochre and white, or umber and white, sometimes orpiment and white, very thin, and on that retouched his features and tinted the cheeks and other parts of the head which might require it with brighter and more decided colour; a slight glaze, little more than the varnish, completed his work.

Sometimes, instead of scumbling, he employed glazing, with red-lead or vermilion, which, being passed thinly over his white preparation, gave considerable power to the local colour of his head; in this he painted thinly with ultramarine and white, and orpiment or yellow ochre and white, tinting in parts with carmine, and finished with a thin glaze of asphaltum, at that time called Jew's pitch.

Occasionally, he allowed his first glaze to dry, and then painted thinly over it with orpiment and white, ultramarine and white, and vermilion, or carmine, and white; but always allowing the colour underneath to appear, more or less, through whatever he passed over it.

In very many of his pictures, which have been injudiciously cleaned, the first preparation is all that now remains; and in some cases, his glazing tints, and other colours, have changed or disappeared altogether, owing to his indiscriminate use of perishable materials, for he was a very indifferent chemist.

The cracking of his pictures is chiefly occasioned by painting over his preparation before it was thoroughly dry, or by using materials on the surface of his pictures which dried harder than those employed underneath.

Dark colours, and particularly those which are transparent, will generally open in large cracks when laid on very thickly, or employed with much vehicle; and this was frequently the case in Sir Joshua's pictures, whose dark backgrounds, hair, and draperies were often painted with a considerable body of colour. In Reynolds's memoranda of December, 1755, we find the following record of the colours which he then made use of, and of the order in which they were arranged on his pallet.

" Poussin's landscapes in the Verossi palace are painted on a dark ground made of Indian red and black.

" For painting the flesh: —black, blue-black, white, lake, carmine, orpiment, yellow ochre, ultramarine, and varnish.

" To lay the pallet; first, lay carmine and white, in different degrees; second, lay orpiment and white, ditto; third, lay blue-black and white, ditto.

" The first sitting, for expedition, make a mixture on the pallet as near the sitter's complexion as you can."

He also adds these observations on colouring :—

" To preserve the colours fresh and clean in painting, it must be done by laying on more colours, and not by rubbing them in when they are once laid; and, if it can be done, they should be laid just in their proper places at first, and not any more be touched; because the freshness of the colours is tarnished and lost by mixing and jumbling them together, for there are certain colours which destroy each other by the motion of the pencil when mixed to excess."

We may observe, that not only is the brilliancy as well as the freshness of tints considerably impaired by indiscriminate mixing and softening, but, if colours be too much worked about with the brush, the oil will always rise to the surface, and the performance will turn comparatively yellow in consequence.

The following remarks, extracted from other parts of Sir Joshua's numerous memoranda, will be found to be interesting as well as serviceable to the student in painting : —

" Never give the least touch with your pencil till you have present in your mind a perfect idea of your future work.

" Paint at the greatest possible distance from your sitter, and place the picture," occasionally, " near to the sitter, or sometimes under him, so as to see both together.

" In beautiful faces, keep the whole circumference about the eye in a mezzotinto, as seen in the works of Guido and the best of Carlo Maratti.

" Endeavour to look at the subject or sitter from which you are painting as if it was a picture; this will in some degree render it more easy to be copied.

" In painting, consider the object before you, whatever it may be, as more made out by light and shadow than by lines.

" A student should begin his career by a careful finishing and making out the parts; as practice will give him freedom and facility of hand: a bold and unfinished manner is commonly the habit of old age.

" *On painting a Head.*

" Let those parts which turn or retire from the eye be of

The same ground might do for all other subjects as well as landscapes.

" Make a finished sketch of every portrait you intend to paint, and by the help of that dispose your living model: then finish at the first time on a ground made of Indian red and black.

" All the shadows in the works of the Caracci, Guercino, as well as the Venetian school, are made with little colour, but much oil: the Venetians seem to be made only of a drying oil, composed of red lead and oil.

---

broken or mixed colours, as being less distinguished and nearer the borders.

" Let all your shadows be of one colour; glaze them till they are so.

" Use red colours in the shadows of the most delicate complexions, but with discretion.

" Contrive to have a skreen with red or yellow colour on it, to reflect the light on the shaded part of the sitter's face.

" Avoid the chalk, the brick-dust, and the charcoal; and think on a pearl and a ripe peach.

" Avoid long-continued lines in the eyes, and too many sharp ones.

" Take care to give your figure a sweep or sway.

" Outlines in waves, soft, and almost imperceptible against the background.

" Never make the contour too coarse.

" Avoid also those outlines and lines which are equal, which make parallels, triangles, &c.

" The parts which are nearest to the eye appear most enlightened, deeper shadowed, and better seen.

" Keep broad lights and shadows, and also principal lights and shadows.

" Where there is the deepest shadow, it is accompanied by the brightest light.

" Let nothing start out, or be too strong for its place.

" Squareness has grandeur; it gives firmness to the forms: a serpentine line, in comparison, appears feeble and tottering.

" The younger pupils are best taught by those who are in a small degree advanced in knowledge above themselves, and from that cause proceeds the peculiar advantage of studying in academies.

" The painter who knows his profession from principles may apply them alike to any branch of the art, and succeed in it."

"In comparison with Titian and Paul Veronese, all the other Venetian painters appear hard: they have, in a degree, the manner of Rembrandt; all mezzotinto, occasioned by scumbling over their pictures with some dark oil or colour."

In some of these memoranda Sir Joshua reasons on what he has observed, and notes rules for the regulation of his own conduct, and remarks which have occurred to him on subjects connected with his art.

"After a strict examination of the best pictures, the benefit to be derived from them is to draw such conclusions as may serve in future as fixed rules of practice; taking care not to be amused with trifles, but to learn to regard the excellences chiefly.

"There are some who are very diligent in examining pictures, and yet are not at all advanced in their judgment, although they can remember the exact colour of every figure, &c. in the picture; but not reflecting deeply on what they have seen, or making observations to themselves, they are not at all improved by the crowd of particulars that swim on the surface of their brains; as nothing enters deep enough into their minds to do them benefit through digestion.

"A painter should form his rules from pictures, rather than from books or precepts; this is having information at the first hand — at the fountain head. Rules were first made from pictures — not pictures from rules. The first compilers of rules for painting were in the situation in which it is most desirable a student should be. Thus every picture an artist sees, whether the most excellent or most ordinary, he should consider from whence that fine effect or that ill effect proceeds; and then there is no picture ever so indifferent but he may look at to his profit.

"The manner of the English travellers in general,

and of those who pique themselves on studying virtù, is, that, instead of examining the beauties of those works of fame, and why they are esteemed, they only enquire the subject of the picture, and the name of the painter; the history of a statue, and where it was found; and write that down. Some Englishmen, while I was in the Vatican, came there and spent above six hours in writing down whatever the antiquary dictated to them; they scarcely ever looked at the paintings the whole time."

Among these remarks we find the following observations with respect to the estimate which Reynolds had formed of the character of Apelles as a painter:—

"It is a matter of dispute among painters whether Apelles would be esteemed a great painter were he now alive: the very argument I have heard urged against it is what persuades me he was a good painter; to wit, that he made use of but four colours.* A remark made by Pliny is, that he polished away or varnished over his pictures to take off their glaring effect, and to deaden the tints: but Pliny does not speak on this point like a painter; he observed that the pictures of Apelles had not that raw and gaudy colouring like those of his contemporaries, and therefore imagined it was occasioned by a varnish, but it was his judicious breaking those colours to the standard of nature.

"The ancient painters, I am fully persuaded, painted in the great and true style; of this the following anecdote mentioned by Pliny is a considerable confirmation:—

"A painter had executed a picture which he valued

* Northcote tells us that "it was always Sir Joshua's advice to his scholars to use as few colours as possible, as the only means of being most secure from becoming heavy or dirty in colouring."

for what is alone truly valuable in painting, that is, character and expression. On its being exposed in public, he was mortified to find, among other commendations bestowed upon this picture, a partridge admired that he had painted in a corner of the picture, that it was so natural it looked to be alive; he defaced it entirely."*

In his estimate of the style of Apelles, Sir Joshua is very probably correct; for it is generally observed by ancient writers on the subject, who had themselves seen the works which they alluded to, that the style of colouring adopted by the eminent Greek painters was characterised by chasteness and simplicity; that they used but few colours (four are mentioned by Pliny and others), and that these were not of a brilliant or obtrusive nature. When the art revived in the hands of the Romans, this style was soon exchanged for a florid and gaudy one; expensive and glaring colours were then thought essential to the imposing effect of a picture, and exaggerated action and expression to the sentiment and character of the figures. The principles by which the art was formerly governed had been replaced by others of a very different nature; and the contrast was frequently observed, and commented upon very severely. Even in the Augustan age the taste for gaudy colouring is noticed by Cicero, who draws a parallel between the art of his time and that of the ancient Greek painters; remarking on the occasion, that the works of modern artists, though at first more attractive in point of colour than those of the

* Alluding to a celebrated picture by Protogenes, mentioned by Pliny and Strabo, and representing a satyr leaning against a pillar, on which the artist had introduced a partridge. As the bird attracted more admiration than the figure, it was afterwards effaced by the painter.

ancients, soon palled upon the sense of the spectator, and eventually ceased to give pleasure.

With respect to the means which Apelles employed to subdue or to neutralise the colouring of his pictures, it seems likely that Pliny was correct; for the process he alludes to is evidently that which modern painters would designate as glazing or toning: and this appears to have been done with a neutral colour, in the way that Correggio employed the same material. As the Greeks were unacquainted with the use of oil colours, this method of neutralising would appear to be more practicable than that of breaking the colours, as they were placed on the picture. The result of the process, whatever it might have been, is, however, the characteristic which Reynolds alludes to, and the conclusion which he draws from the facts advanced is consistent with the notices of ancient authorities.

It has been observed that these remarks of Sir Joshua can only be considered as expressions of belief on a subject with regard to which we have not the materials of certain knowledge; and that they appear to be contradicted by the Elgin marbles, and by the poetry of the Greek nation, which is full of graphic images of homely as well as of heroic life. But unless we doubt the authority of all ancient writers who have given us information on the subject, and explained the leading principles by which the Greek painters acquired the high reputation which they enjoyed, we must allow that they regulated their ideas of perfection in form and expression upon the same broad and elevated principles which formed the taste of Phidias and Praxiteles. Like them the Grecian painters looked at nature in the abstract, and read it in the magnificent conceptions of Homer, and other writers of an elevated class, when its visible appear-

ance, if we may use the expression, was unequal to the object contemplated.

That images of homely as well as of heroic life may be found in the poetry of the nation, is not, we think, a reason why these should be selected for the purposes of highly intellectual art, although they might be, and have been, employed with advantage by the Greeks in representations of a domestic nature. Neither does it follow that the painter of humble life, who should take the simple pastorals of Theocritus as subjects for his pencil, must necessarily deviate from those general principles which regulate the higher departments of the art. Propriety is not inconsistent with elevated and comprehensive views, and the shepherd may be painted on the same general rules by which the monarch or the hero are delineated. No man could have illustrated Theocritus better than Nicholas Poussin; yet his style of art is formed on a severer view of nature, on a closer adherence to abstract principles, than even that of Raphael himself. The heroes of the Idylls are not ordinary cowherds; and the painter who would truly represent them must take the same poetic view, the same general idea, of the class to which they belong, as that by which the poet was regulated.

What is emphatically called the "grand style of art" is not necessarily confined to elevated subjects, but may take the range of nature, through every gradation, with equal propriety of choice. A close adherence to generalising principles is all that is requisite to bound it, and it is with reference chiefly to this peculiarity, and not so much to the nature of the subjects on which it may employ itself, that the distinction alluded to has has been bestowed upon it.

With respect to the character of the Elgin marbles,

we cannot persuade ourselves that they are formed on other principles than those by which the Hercules or the Apollo are executed. In each example the artist has given us the general idea of the species or class represented; and we think that the Theseus is as fine and as complete an illustration of "the grand style of art" as either of the deities in question.

"Raffaelle," continues Sir Joshua, in the memoranda from which we have already given extracts, "had the true fire and spirit of his art: all his figures appear to be really and unaffectedly intently occupied according to their intended destinations. This is the proper spirit of Raffaelle; instead of which we find, in most other painters, ridiculous contortions of body, actions that we never saw in nature: that, as Shakspeare humorously expresses it, "one would think that some of nature's journeymen had made them, they imitate humanity so abominably."

"We find Raffaelle, in his works, sometimes possessed, as it were, with the very soul and spirit of Michel Angelo, and perceive that it is from him that he received his inspiration: witness his God the Father dividing light from darkness, and Elias lifted up to heaven. Raffaelle despised himself when he saw the Capella Sistina of Michel Angelo, and resolved to alter his style entirely; and there is as great a difference between the Heliodorus and his other paintings in the Vatican, as there is between the Greek and the Roman sculpture."

"Sometimes a painter, by seeking for attitudes too much, becomes cold and insipid. This is generally the case with those who would give every figure a fine action; they lose sight of nature, and become uninteresting and cold."

"Another general fault is that which the French

are commonly guilty of, seeking after what they call *spirit and fire*, and thus outstrip the modesty of nature, when their subject requires no such fire, or, perhaps, quite the contrary; however, they learnt it of him whom they esteem as perfection itself — that was *their master.*"

In some other observations on the French painters of his day, Reynolds observes, that " the French cannot boast of above one painter of a truly just and correct taste, free of any mixture of affectation or bombast (Nicholas Poussin appears to be contemplated), and he was always proud to own from what models he had formed his style; to wit, Raffaelle and the antique; but all the others of that nation seem to have taken their ideas of grandeur from romances, instead of the Roman or Grecian histories. Thus their heroes are decked out so nice and fine, that they look like knights errant just entering the lists, at a tournament, in gilt armour, and loaded most unmercifully with silk, satin, velvet, gold, jewels, &c., and hold up their heads and carry themselves with an air like a petit-maître with his dancing-master at his elbow: thus corrupting the true taste, and leading it astray from the pure, the simple, and grand style, by a mock majesty and false magnificence. Even the rude, uncultivated manner of Caravaggio is still a better extreme than those affected turns of the head, fluttering draperies, contrasts of attitude, and distortions of passion."

On the style of the modern Italians he has remarked that " the Italians, at present, in their historical pictures, do not attempt to paint the drapery to appear *natural:* I believe for no other reason than because their masters before them did not; for if they were guided by the same principles that influenced their

great predecessors, they would likewise avoid the glaring colouring that at present they adopt, and attend more to a grand simplicity in all the other branches of the art."

After noticing the practice to which he has alluded, Sir Joshua, in accordance with his usual habit, proceeds to reason on the principle by which it should be regulated.

"When a true judge of art is wrapt in admiration on the *intellectual* excellences of a picture, it is with pain that he hears a tame remark on the colouring, handling, &c. When, like St. Paul, he is, by enthusiasm, lifted up (if I may so say) to the third heaven, he is too high to observe the inferior parts — he only gazes on the whole together.

"Suppose a person, while he is contemplating a capital picture by Raffaelle, or the Caracci, while he is wrapt in wonder at the sight of St. Paul preaching at Athens, and the various dispositions of his audience, or is struck with the distress of the mother in the Death of the Innocents, or with tears in his eyes beholds the Dead Christ of Caracci, would it not offend him to have his attention called off to observe a piece of drapery in the picture *naturally* represented?"

The answer is obvious, for individuality should form no part of a picture that is painted upon general principles; and if drapery be naturally, instead of classically, represented, in a work of such description, the unity of the piece must necessarily be sacrificed, and the attention diverted from the principal subject.

The natural representation of drapery, in the sense which is here intended by the term, implies attention to all the minutiæ of detail by which it is distinguished in nature: the classical representation of it has reference only to the general character of the mass, which

is all that the painter should call the attention to, who, does not make detail his principal object.

It has been stated, in allusion to these remarks of Sir Joshua, that "the sentiment and character of the figure will dictate the drapery; and that when these are strong, and true, and natural, they will always predominate over the accessories. Had he advised," it is added, "to clothe a figure gaily or gravely according to the style of the countenance and gesture, Reynolds would have spoken more in keeping with his own practice."

But they who are unacquainted with the conduct of a picture would be surprised to find how trifling a circumstance will call the eye from the principal subject; and when general rules are neglected interruptions must occur without end. In historic and poetic compositions, we repeat, nature must be represented in the abstract, and all that tends to give identity to minutiæ detracts from the grandeur of the whole. But let us allow Reynolds to comment upon his own observations.

"In the same manner as the historical painter never enters into the *detail* of colours, so neither does he debase his conceptions with minute attention to the discriminations of drapery. It is the inferior style that marks the variety of stuffs. With him the clothing is neither woollen, nor linen, nor silk, satin, or velvet: it is drapery; it is nothing more. The art of disposing the foldings of drapery makes a very considerable part of the painter's study. To make it merely *natural* is a mechanical operation, to which neither genius nor taste is required; whereas it requires the nicest judgment to dispose the drapery so that the folds shall have an easy communication, and gracefully follow each other, with such easy negligence as to look like the effect of

chance, and at the same time show the figure to the greatest advantage."*

In the works of Raphael, and of other great masters who excelled in the higher departments of the art, we never find those peculiarities expressed which Sir Joshua has here pointed out as unbecoming the attention of historical painters. The attire of their figures must be considered as *drapery*, without any reference to the nature of the material of which it might chance to be composed; and we are sure that every artist who understands his profession will coincide in the propriety of so representing it.

The zeal and the judgment with which Reynolds pursued his studies at Rome did not prevent him from occasionally indulging his fancy in a lighter and very different style of art from that which he pondered over in the Vatican. We allude to a species of caricature of which he has left several examples. One of them is a parody on Raphael's School of Athens, and comprises about thirty figures, embracing portraits of most of the English gentlemen at that time resident in the metropolis. "It is now in possession," says Northcote, "of Mr. Joseph Henry of Straffan, in Ireland, whose portrait it also contains; and I have heard Sir Joshua himself say," he adds, "that although it was universally allowed he executed subjects of this kind with much humour and spirit, he yet held it absolutely necessary to abandon the practice, since it must corrupt his taste as a portrait painter, whose duty it becomes to aim at discovering the perfections only of those whom he is to represent."—"It is scarcely to be credited," observes his biographer, "that an artist so refined, from the earliest dawnings of his genius, should have been

* Discourse iv.

at any period a caricaturist." But it is probable that Reynolds had more in contemplation when he painted the pictures alluded to than the mere whim of executing caricatures. He has recommended the students, in his discourses, to take the plan of any picture of the ancient masters which they may propose to themselves as a model, and paint a companion to it, as a means of exercising themselves in the qualities which have attracted their attention.

The distribution of figures, and the general plan of the School of Athens, might be applied, with this view, to any other group that the fancy of the artist might suggest; and Reynolds may have painted his caricature with the design of exercising himself in composition as well as in the delineation of character and expression. As he never had the advantage of an academic education, he could not paint a classical subject after the model of any picture of Raphael; and he probably imagined that in what he *could* effect he might be able to call his powers into action, and obtain at the same time a memorandum of the work which he imitated, so far as related to the application of the general principles on which it was painted.

We have no authority for this supposition, and have never seen the picture alluded to, or any others of a similar nature which he painted; but Reynolds was accustomed to make the most of every thing, and feeling himself unequal to historical compositions, he exercised his invention in caricature.

Before he left England, Reynolds had been strongly urged by his patron, Lord Mount Edgcumbe, to put himself under the tuition of Pompeo Battoni, a native of Lucca, at that time established in Rome, and who appears to have been considered there, and, indeed, in

almost every other part of Europe, as little inferior to Raphael.

"Battoni had some talent," observes Farington, "but his works are dry, cold, and insipid. That such performances," he adds, "should have been so extolled in the very seat and centre of the fine arts seems wonderful. But in this manner has public taste been operated upon; and from the period when art was carried to the highest point of excellence known in modern times it has thus gradually declined. A succession of artists followed each other, who, being esteemed the most eminent in their own time, were praised extravagantly by an ignorant public, and, in the several schools they established, their own productions were the only objects of study."

On seeing the works of Battoni, and comparing them with those in the Vatican, our young artist judged it expedient to think for himself, and declined the well-intended, but injudicious, advice of his patron. In this, as, indeed, on almost every occasion, he early displayed a perception of excellence, and a power of just discrimination, which few of his age and experience have been gifted with. If he failed to appreciate, on a first examination, the peculiar characteristics of Raphael, he was able, in defiance of popular opinion, against which he seemed destined to struggle throughout life with success, to distinguish between the false light of prejudice and the lustre of genuine excellence. He saw that Battoni was unequal to the task of instructing him; and soon discovered that even in the great metropolis of art there was no one better qualified to become his preceptor. "To follow such guides," he was fully persuaded, "would not only retard the student, but mislead him." "On whom, then, could he" safely "rely, or who" was able to "show him the path that

leads to excellence?" His good sense suggested that "those great masters who have travelled the same road with success are the most likely to conduct others;" that "the works of those who have stood the test of ages have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend.

"The duration and stability of their fame is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but bound to the human heart by every tie of sympathetic approbation."*

His course was no sooner opened to him than Reynolds prepared to travel forward with all the energy and perseverance which so peculiarly distinguished him. He looked to Raphael and Michel Angelo as the guides of his youthful inexperience, and devoted himself almost exclusively to the study of their works.†

"By judiciously considering these magnificent productions," says Farington, "he gradually became sensible of their high quality; and to expand his mind, and acquire a larger practice of the hand, he copied such portions of them as might be afterwards useful to him. He did all that was possible upon the limited foundation he had laid; nor was his labour in vain. He never was competent," from want of knowledge of design, "to adopt the grand style of art; but by great diligence and attention he enlarged his conceptions and refined his taste, so as to show in his portraits a new mode of thinking, on this branch of the art, perfectly distinct and original.

"Not any of the great masters who preceded him

* Discourse ii.

† His diligence and perseverance in the study of those masters were continued under every disadvantage of season; and the deafness to which Reynolds was afterwards subject is said to have proceeded from a cold which he caught, and probably neglected, while pursuing his researches in the chambers of the Vatican.

stood more independently than Sir Joshua Reynolds; and there are peculiar charms and graces in the best of his works, which are seldom, if ever, found in the productions of those eminent artists who had greater general powers than he possessed.

"The great progress which he made in his art proved the truth of a maxim, which he always maintained, that 'all refined knowledge is gradually obtained, and that by study and exertion alone every excellence of whatever kind might be acquired.'" *

At Rome, Joseph Marchi, a young Roman, about fifteen years of age, was engaged by Reynolds as a pupil, and accompanied his master to England. His talents as an artist were not, however, very brilliant, and his progress was inconsiderable. "He appears, nevertheless, to have been a man of sense and integrity; and, from the excellence of his temper, and simplicity of his character, was universally beloved and respected."

Having stayed at Rome as long as his resources allowed him to remain there, young Reynolds proceeded to Florence, where he remained two months, and painted a portrait of Mr. Wilton, the sculptor, which attracted considerable notice. "It was a brilliant display," observes Farington, "of those qualities in which he so eminently excelled; but of the peculiar merits of the picture he did not then appear to be sufficiently sensible. From Florence," continues this biographer, "he went to Bologna, and from thence to Parma, Modena, Milan, Padua, and Venice, where he remained only a month or six weeks." His visit to Genoa is not mentioned by Mr. Farington; but Northcote has furnished us with extracts from his journal, containing memoranda of what he noticed in that city. They are slight, and comparatively unimportant; but his observations

on the cupola of the cathedral at Parma are given somewhat more in detail: they are comments on rules which he appears to have formed for the regulation of his future practice.

"Relieve the light parts of the picture with a dark ground, or the dark part with a light ground, whichever will have the most agreeable effect, or make the best mass. The cupola of Parma has the dark objects relieved, and the lights scarcely distinguishable from the ground. Some whole figures are considered as shadows; all the lights are of one colour: it is in the shadows only that the colours vary. In general, all the shadows should be of one colour, and the lights only to be distinguished by different tints; at least it should be so when the background is dark in the picture."

It has always appeared remarkable to those who knew the feeling which Reynolds had for colour, that he should not have stayed longer at Venice, where this attractive part of his art is displayed in its greatest perfection.*

Venice is the spot where painters love to linger; there they listen to the distant thunders of the Vatican, in calm enjoyment of the sunshine around them. The solemn peal is heard at intervals, but the lightning is powerless. The genius of colour has thrown her spell

* It seems very probable that the state of his finances made it necessary that he should economise his time, for we find him shortly afterwards at Lyons with only six louis in his pocket. Had it been otherwise, we think that the attractions of Giorgione, of Titian, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese, would have detained him for a much longer period. The extraordinary, we almost feel inclined to say the miraculous, powers of Tintoret, which are nowhere displayed to their fullest extent but at Venice, would alone have been sufficient to occupy more time in examining than he was able to bestow upon the united treasures of the school.

around them; and while he is within it the painter is safe from the shafts of Michel Angelo and Raphael.

We are persuaded that Reynolds had too much feeling for colour to allow his Roman reason to operate at Venice; and feel convinced that, if circumstances had permitted him to remain there, his departure would not have been in any degree accelerated by the result of a comparison between the merits of the two great schools. In any other place we acknowledge the pre-eminence justly claimed by the Roman school; but at Venice the painter will not admit a thought to the prejudice of that of the Venetians. There the feeling for colour absorbs the mind exclusively: it has no place for other ideas, and no inclination to make room for them.

At the same time, we cannot allow that the beauties of colour are unintellectual. We all feel that they are attractive, but there are few who can tell why they are so, and few who can discriminate between the truly beautiful and the common-place, the gaudy or the meretricious.

The mind that is open to the truth and the elegance of colour must be formed by cultivation to receive true impressions, and to judge by an elevated standard. A true feeling for colour is as much an acquired taste as the feeling for genuine excellence in form and expression; and he who has not learnt to think with refinement and propriety will endeavour in vain to acquire it. The ordinary study of the works of the Venetian school will greatly assist in training the student to look at nature with the eye of a painter: but he cannot discriminate between the beauties of that school if he has not acquired the feeling of a poet; and without such a power of just discrimination he

will never be able to apply what he gains from it to the purposes of intellectual art.

To the cultivated mind, no other works are necessary for the attainment of perfection in colour than those of the Venetian painters. The Caracci have given a poetical sentiment to their works, by reducing them to the low tones of a colourless twilight: but such an effect is rather gained by the absence of colour, than by a masterly and scientific use of it; and he who reduces the scale of his pictures to little more than an effect of black and white, is not much indebted to the magic of colouring for the impression which they make upon the spectators. The absence of light and colour will give one peculiar kind of solemnity, as well in nature as in art; but this is a solemnity of comparatively easy acquisition, and the colourist of moderate abilities may attain it. The solemn tones of Titian have a higher degree of sentiment than those gloomy illustrations of poetical feeling, of which an engraving might almost be said to convey to us an adequate idea.

To give sublimity and pathos by the power of colour only (we are speaking now with reference to the *effect* of a picture) is an art of much more difficult attainment. But such effects have been continually produced by many of the Venetian painters; and, indeed, it appears to be peculiar to that school to make up the plan of their pictures, with very little assistance from light and shade, by the judicious employment of light and dark colours. When poetical feeling is combined with the power of producing effects of this nature, the result is impressive in the highest degree; and the painter who is capable of uniting such advantages must always rank high in intellectual art, whatever may be his power of design.

Indeed, to exert the power of colour to its greatest possible extent, in the expression of poetical sentiment, appears to us to require the same quality of mind that is essential for the acquirement of that high degree of excellence in delineating character and expression to which Michel Angelo and Raphael have attained; and it seems to be even more difficult of acquisition, because the means by which alone it may be gained are less capable of being accurately defined.*

To separate what appears to depend upon feeling from that which may be clearly reduced to rule, is the most arduous task of the preceptor in colour; and it is probable that the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of the task prevented Reynolds from attempting to instruct his young auditors in the comprehensive art of colouring, otherwise than by giving them some general rules for their guidance, by directing them to the sources from which he gained his own information, the works of the ancient masters, and by opening to them such views of art in general as were calculated to enlarge

* In offering these remarks on the importance of colour, considered as an intellectual pursuit, we must not be understood to have any intention of depreciating the art of design. The power of delineating passion and sentiment, as they display themselves to the classical painter in his study of the human countenance, and the art of giving dignity and grace to the human form, and of distinguishing between its general and its accidental characteristics in the representation of ideal beauty, will always open to the artist the widest field of excellence, and command the highest possible interest. The fame of Michel Angelo and. Raphael is built on no uncertain foundation; and they have not studied and ennobled a pursuit which can be said to be unworthy of their exertions. But we think that the general estimate of colour is far below what that fascinating art is entitled to, and that much more of true poetical sentiment enters into the composition of a fine colourist than even painters themselves will at all times allow; though none are so well qualified to feel properly on such points, and, indeed, we may almost say that none but a painter is qualified to give a sound opinion on the subject.

their minds, and fit them for the study of intellectual pursuits at a more advanced period of their academic labours. It was at the same time essential that the art of design, in the extended meaning of the term, should be first acquired by the students; and the acquisition of this was quite sufficient to engross their attention, without diverting it prematurely into other channels.

But if to teach a young artist how to colour be impracticable, it is by no means impossible that he should teach *himself* to colour; and this mode of acquiring the refinements of the art appears to be the most effectual one by which they can be attained. The wide field of nature, as viewed through the medium of the works of the ancient masters, and more particularly those of Titian, will be found to be the most infallible guides to the student. From them he will learn what it is most desirable to select, and how far the materials selected may be disposed of to the best advantage. From the judicious opposition of one colour with another he will learn to see the relative value of each, and will gain at the same time a general knowledge of the requisite proportion of warm and cool colours, and of the places in which they can best be employed. He will there perceive how colours are blended with and lost in others, and how they are occasionally contrasted by abrupt opposition; how the same colour is recalled in different parts of a picture, and in what proportion to its principal mass; together with the motive which the painter had in view in determining the relative proportions adopted. He will see how far the light and shadow of a picture dictates to the painter the arrangement of colours, and the places in which they should be forced upon the eye or retire from the notice of the spectator. He will make him-

self acquainted with the various contrivances which painters are occasionally obliged to employ to counteract, or to conceal, an unpleasing disposition of lines, to which he may, perhaps, have been confined by the nature of his subject, or into which he may inadvertently have fallen. He will learn how such contrivances may be successfully resorted to, in balancing those parts of a composition for which there are no sufficient accompaniments in the objects to which the artist has been limited; how far a comparatively insignificant mass may be made of primary importance, and how the eye may be averted from a large and conspicuous one to which it is requisite that it should not be directed.

All, in short, that has been successfully effected by others may be said to be placed at the artist's disposal after studying attentively a succession of pictures, and reasoning with judgment upon what he observes in them. What he gains from the study of one will assist him in the examination of another, and he will advance in the knowledge of his art with a rapidity which he could scarcely have anticipated before he commenced his researches.

The advantages which the treasures of Venice will afford to the painter who seriously prosecutes this method of study, — and Reynolds *did* seriously pursue it, — were not, however, suffered to display themselves in vain. He made numerous slight sketches in his pocket-book (after the manner described in his notes on Du Fresnoy's poem) of the relative proportions of light and dark employed by the Venetian painters; and he found, as he observes, on comparing them together, that they differed very little from each other.*

* Respecting Mr. Mason's translation of Du Fresnoy's Art of Painting, Northcote has given us the following memorandum: —

While in the north of Italy our young artist became acquainted with Zuccarelli, the celebrated landscape painter; and at his house he painted the portrait of a gentleman in a style which appeared to be new to his host: Zuccarelli was struck with the boldness and decision of his execution; and one day, while overlooking the work, he turned to Marchi and exclaimed, "Che spirito ha quest' uomo!"—What spirit this man displays!

At Rome, or at Florence, for the story is differently recorded, Reynolds met Astley,—a fellow-labourer with him in the unprofitable vineyard of Hudson. Astley was an idle and a dissipated man, and, consequently, a very indifferent painter: his literary attainments were still more inconsiderable; and Reynolds used to say of him, that "he would rather run three miles to deliver a message by word of mouth than venture to write a note." He had, however, the patronage of Sir Horace Mann, the English minister, and was employed now and then in painting portraits, and still oftener in making copies for English travellers of *modern* Italian pictures. As might naturally be expected, Astley's prospects in art were not of a very brilliant nature, and fortune had hitherto used him but shabbily: she relented in time to save the artist from himself; and afterwards introduced him to the notice of a wealthy widow—the relict of Sir Thomas Duckenfield Daniell—who was so much struck with his appearance and demeanour, (for Astley

"It appears, if the world owe any thing to Mr. Mason for this production, that they are also partly indebted for it to Sir Joshua, as it had long lain in manuscript, unfinished, in Mr. Mason's library, and was only at length brought forward in consequence of his having requested a sight of it, and then freely made an offer of illustrating it in the manner he has done, which renders the work invaluable."

was a tall, showy man,) that she soon took occasion to sit to him for her portrait; and before it was completed offered him her hand. It was calculated that Astley, who survived his wife, and ultimately succeeded to the whole of her property, wasted not le than a hundred and fifty thousand pounds; though he ill contrived to leave considerable property to four children, the offspring of a subsequent marriage.

Northcote has recorded a whimsical anecdote of this favourite of fortune and Lady Daniell: at the period here alluded to, Astley's purse and his wardrobe were not better furnished than his head; but he managed to preserve a good outward appearance, and kept up the credit of all. He was often seen abroad, and frequently joined his brother artists in little evening excursions into the country, in which Reynolds also sometimes united. On one of these occasions, as the heat was more than usually oppressive, the whole party threw off their coats, with the exception of poor Astley, who showed great reluctance in parting with his gay outer garment. This appeared to be very inconsistent with the comfort of a hot summer's evening; and his companions indulged themselves in so many jokes on the extreme singularity of his refusal, that the coat could no longer be retained. When the veil was withdrawn, the hinder part of Astley's waistcoat was found to be composed of one of his own pictures, and displayed a tremendous waterfall, greatly to the confusion of the unfortunate artist, and the diversion of the astonished spectators.

After an absence of nearly three years, Reynolds made his arrangements for returning home; and from a trivial occurrence which Malone has recorded, and which Sir Joshua himself used to mention, we may conclude that the prospect of revisiting his native land was not

beheld with indifference, even in the "country which Michel Angelo and Raffaelle had embellished by their genius and their works."

In compliment to the English gentlemen who attended on the occasion, the manager of the opera at Venice had ordered the band to play "an English ballad tune." "Happening to be the popular air which was played or sung in almost every street at the time of their leaving London, by suggesting to them that metropolis, with all its connections and endearing circumstances, it immediately brought tears into our" artist's "eyes, as well as into those of his countrymen who were present."

Reynolds proceeded to England by the route of Mont Cenis, and at the foot of the mountain he met his old master, Hudson, accompanied by Roubiliac. "Hudson had thought it prudent," observes Farington, "to perform the customary pilgrimage of artists, and was making a hurried tour to the land where art is seen in classical perfection. The expedition with which he executed his purpose was extraordinary. He was only two days in Rome, and ran from place to place with such speed, that he accomplished his tour in Italy and returned to Paris before Reynolds had quitted that city; and they came from Calais to Dover in the same packet; so that he could not have been absent from England more than two months."

On his arrival at Lyons, Reynolds found his purse very low: he had only six louis left; two of which he gave to Marchi, with orders to proceed as he could, and reserved four to carry him to Paris, where in eight days he was joined by his pupil, who had performed the journey from Lyons on foot.

At Paris he painted a beautiful portrait of Mrs. Chambers, the wife of his friend, the celebrated archi-

tect, who afterwards received the honour of knighthood, and with whom he long continued in habits of intimacy: respecting him, says Northcote, "as an instance of genius rising in opposition to circumstance."* He also painted the portrait of Mrs. Gothier at Paris; and both these pictures were afterwards engraved. He was, however, very actively employed at other times in viewing whatever was remarkable; and we may glean from his memoranda that, during the month he remained at the capital of the great nation, he saw quite enough of the French style of art to give him a high opinion of their talent in design, and a very indifferent one of their ability in painting.

Reynolds arrived in London, October 16. 1752; and finding his health much impaired, he judged it prudent to refresh himself with his native air before he resumed his professional avocations. He remained three months in Devonshire; and while at Plymouth painted the portrait of Dr. Mudge, "a remarkably fine head," observes Northcote; "and from this time," he continues, "a warm, disinterested, and reciprocal friendship subsisted between this truly respectable family of the Mudges and Mr. Reynolds, who always held them in the highest esteem; and the friendly connection between them was kept up to the latest period of his life."

This portrait, and another of a young lady, were all that he undertook while at Plymouth, being strongly urged by his friend and patron, Lord Edgcumbe, to return as soon as possible to the metropolis, as the place where talent could best make itself conspicuous.

* Sir William Chambers, in later years, was actively employed with Reynolds in the establishment of the Royal Academy, and built the rooms which they at present occupy in Somerset House.

In compliance with this advice he proceeded to London, and took handsome apartments in St. Martin's Lane, at that time the favourite and the fashionable rendezvous of artists, about the end of the year 1752; and here he was joined by his youngest sister, Fanny, who took charge of his domestic concerns.

"He found such opposition," Mr. Cunningham truly observes, "as genius is commonly doomed to meet with, and does not always overcome. The boldness of his attempts, the freedom of his conceptions, and the brilliancy of his colouring, were considered as innovations upon the established and orthodox system of portrait manufacture. The artists raised their voices first; and of these Hudson, who had just returned from Rome, was loudest."

At the period now alluded to, the first work that brought Reynolds into notice was a portrait of his pupil Marchi, represented in a Turkish dress, and well known as the picture of a boy with a turban. His old master frequently visited him while engaged in this first example of his newly-adopted style; and when it was completed Hudson looked at it attentively, and then observed, with the addition of his customary oath, "Reynolds, you don't paint so well now as you did before you went to Italy." Astley was present at the time; and Marchi observed a smile upon his countenance at this uncalled-for remark of his preceptor in art, which seemed to indicate that he had discovered the motive of the observation in the jealousy that Hudson experienced.

Ellis, also, an eminent portrait painter of the time, and one of the few remaining artists of the school of Kneller, expressed himself equally dissatisfied. He had heard of the picture of the Turkish boy, and called on Reynolds to see it; when, perceiving the

style of painting by which it was characterised to be very unlike any thing to which he had been accustomed, he observed, with a prophetic shake of the head, "Oh, Reynolds, this will never answer: why you dont paint in the least degree in the manner of Kneller;" and when the young painter began to expostulate, and to vindicate himself from so serious a charge, Ellis, feeling himself unable to give any good reason for the objection which he had advanced, cried out in a great rage, "Shakspeare in poetry, and Kneller in painting, damme!" and immediately left the room.

The prepossession in favour of Kneller and Lely, which Reynolds had to combat in the early part of his career, has been stated by Northcote to "have raised an over-violent prejudice in his breast against those painters, which continued to the end of his life." He has expressed himself strongly, in the following remarks, on the nature of the fashionable style of the day:—

"Most of our portrait painters fall into one general fault. They have got a set of postures which they apply to all persons indiscriminately; the consequence of which is, that all their pictures look like so many sign-post paintings; and if they have a history or a family piece to paint; the first thing they do is to look over their common-place book, containing sketches which they have stolen from various pictures; then they search their prints over, and pilfer one figure from one print and another from a second, but never take the trouble of thinking for themselves. On the contrary, the painter who has a genius, first makes himself master of the subject he is to represent, by reading or otherwise; then works his imagination up into a kind of enthusiasm, till, in a degree, he perceives the whole event before his eyes, when, as quick as lightning, he gives his rough sketch on paper or can-

vass. By these means his work has the air of genius stamped upon it; whilst the contrary mode of practice will infallibly be productive of tameness, and of such pictures as will have the semblance of copies. After the painter has made his sketch from his idea only, he may be allowed to look at the works of his predecessors for dresses, ornaments, &c. of the times he intends to represent.

"Every artist is a painter for himelf: whenever he hears or reads any remarkable event, he forms to himself the looks, actions, and even the ground on which it was transacted. The painter has nothing to do but to copy those images on canvass which he has in his mind's eye.

"Suidas says that Phidias and Zeuxis were both of them transported by the same enthusiasm that gave life to all their works."

It may here be remarked, that few painters have profited more from the labours of others than Reynolds: he took hints from pictures, from books, from prints, of which he had a large and valuable collection, from drawings of the old masters, which he also possessed in great number, and from every thing, in fact, from which ideas could be gained that had originated with his predecessors. But his observation of nature was at the same time so extensive, and his perception of character so just and so strong, that, assisted by a never-failing sense of propriety, and a peculiar elegance of mind, he was enabled, without any great exuberance of fancy, to give to other men's ideas an air of originality by the manner in which he applied them. This is not imitation; and, indeed, we may add, what Sir Joshua himself has observed, that there is no better method by which an artist of discrimination can acquire and preserve the

appearance of originality than by making himself master of the ideas of others. The new ideas which Reynolds acquired from the study of the works of the great Italian masters enabled him to reform the vitiated taste of his country, and to maintain the ascendency, which they were chiefly instrumental in establishing, to the end of his brilliant career. Much of his originality was, however, gained from nature; particularly that which he manifested in his admirable representations of children, and in marking the peculiar characteristics of beauty, as exemplified in the varieties of female form. At the same time, with respect to what he gleaned from others, it is difficult to say, even in those instances in which he adhered most closely to his model, whether his own picture or the work from which he borrowed have the greatest appearance of originality.

The impression which Reynolds had made on the public by his picture of the Turkish boy was soon followed by others still more to his advantage. "The works which had gained him celebrity," observes Mr. Cunningham, "were not the fortunate offspring of some happy moment, but of one who could pour out such pictures in profusion. Better ones were not slow in coming. He painted the second Duke of Devonshire, and this increased his fame. He next painted his patron, Commodore Keppel, and produced a work of such truth and nobleness that it fixed universal attention. This gallant seaman, in pursuing a privateer, ran his ship aground on the coast of France, and was made prisoner in the midst of his exertions to save his crew from destruction. He was released from prison, and acquitted of all blame by a court-martial. The portrait represents him just escaped from the shipwreck. The artist deviated from the

formal style of his rivals, and deviated into excellence. The spirit of a higher species of art is visible in this performance, yet the likeness was reckoned perfect."

"With this picture," says Farington, "he took great pains; for it was observed at the time that after several sittings he defaced his work and began it again. But his labour was not lost: that excellent production was so much admired that it completely established the reputation of the artist. Its dignity and spirit, its beauty of colour, and fine general effect, occasioned equal surprise and pleasure. The public, hitherto accustomed to see only the formal, tame representations which reduced all persons to the same standard of unmeaning insipidity, were captivated with this display of animated character, and the report of its attraction was soon widely circulated."

In allusion to the same work Malone has observed, "The whole interval between the time of Charles I. and the conclusion of the reign of George II., though distinguished by the performances of Lely, Riley, and Kneller, seemed to be annihilated; and the only question was, whether the new painter or Vandyck were the more excellent. For several years before the period we are now speaking of, the painters of portraits contented themselves with exhibiting as correct a resemblance as they could, but seemed not to have thought, or had not the power, of enlivening the canvass by giving a kind of historic air to their pictures. Mr. Reynolds very soon saw how much animation might be obtained by deviating from the insipid manner of his immediate predecessors: hence in many of his portraits, particularly when combined in family groups, we find much of the variety and spirit of a higher species of art. Instead of confining himself to mere likeness, in which, however, he was eminently

happy, he dived, as it were, into the mind, and habits, and manners, of those who sat to him; and accordingly the majority of his portraits are so appropriate and characteristic that the many illustrious persons whom he has delineated will be almost as well known to posterity as if they had seen and conversed with them."*

The admirable portrait of Keppel was soon followed by others of distinguished ability; and Reynolds now found his prospects so brilliant and extensive that he removed to a large house on the north side of Great Newport Street, where he resided for eight or nine years.

"This period," says Northcote, "was the dawn of his splendour; for his amiable modesty, accompanied by his extraordinary talents, soon gained him powerful and active connections: he greatly added to his celebrity by his picture of Miss Greville and her brother, as Cupid and Psyche; and was now employed to paint several ladies of high quality, whose portraits the polite world flocked to see.

"The desire of perpetuating the form of self-complacency crowded his sitting-room with women who wished to be transmitted as angels, and with men who wanted to appear as heroes or philosophers. From Reynolds's pencil they were sure to be gratified. The force and felicity of his portraits not only drew around him the opulence and beauty of the nation, but happily gained him the merited honour of perpetuating the features of all the eminent and distinguished men of

* "The various portraits of Mr. Garrick," Malone is still speaking, "of Dr. Johnson, Dr. Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Gibbon, Lord Mansfield, Lord Thurlow, Lord Heathfield, Mr. Pott, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Cholmondeley, are eminent instances of the truth of this observation." Many more of equal merit might be added to the list.

learning then living ; with most of whom (so attractive were his manners as well as his talents) he contracted an intimacy which only ended with his life."

For a short time, however, he was successfully opposed by a " very mean competitor in art," who had suddenly grown up into unmerited celebrity, and was the idol of many fashionable circles. John Stephen Liotard, a native of Geneva, distinguished by a long beard and Turkish costume, which he wore to attract observation, was the formidable rival of Reynolds. He painted both in miniature and enamel, though, Northcote observes, he seldom practised them, and is best known by his works in crayons. His likenesses were very strong, too like to please those who sat to him; and thus he had great employment the first year, and very little the second. Sir Joshua has thus described his merit as an artist:—

" The only merit in Liotard's pictures is neatness; which, as a general rule, is the characteristic of a low genius, or rather no genius at all. His pictures are just what ladies do when they paint for amusement; nor is there any person, how poor soever their talents may be, but in a very few years, by dint of practice, may possess themselves of every qualification in the art which this *great man* has got." Liotard was twice in England, and stayed about two years each time: the taste of Reynolds prevailed against his beard and gay attire; and though the contest was severe, it was very shortly terminated.

With respect to the laborious, or what is called the highly-finished, manner, Sir Joshua used to remark, that " the high-finished manner of painting would be chosen, if it were possible with it to have that spirit and expression which infallibly fly off when the artist labours: but these are transient beauties which last

less than a moment, and must be painted in as little time; besides, in poring long the imagination is fatigued, and loses its vigour. You will find nature in the first manner; but it will be nature stupid, and without action. The portraits of Holbein are of this high-finished manner; and for colouring and similitude what was ever beyond them? But then you see fixed countenances, and all the features seem to remain immovable. Gerard Vanderwerf also—how spiritless are his figures!"

In some of the following memoranda, written carelessly and in haste, at this period, we find allusions to the fashionable prejudice in favour of Liotard; and they afford us some idea, observes Northcote, of the false taste prevalent in England at the time:—

"It requires an uncommon share of boldness and perseverance to stand against the rushing tide of gothicism. A painter that would please, and has no greater views than making his fortune, I should advise, instead of studying the solemnity of Raffaelle, Poussin, or the Caracci, to turn his eyes on the beautiful and pleasing manner of painting that is practised by the ingenious fan painters. There he will find what is so often called out for,—'Give me daylight.' In these works he will find daylight enough; and if he studies the bright and beautiful colours there made use of, he will merit the deserved and wished-for character of a *pleasing* painter. But to be serious: I do not know so despicable a character in the art as what is understood in general as a pleasing painter; nor any thing that gives me a greater prejudice against a work than when I am told I shall see a pleasing picture: such works are commonly faint, spiritless, gaudy things; how unlike the divine and noble vigour of Raffaelle!

"It is but a cold commendation to say of a painter

he *pleases*, and does no more. He ravishes; he transports with admiration; he seeks to take possession rather of your soul than of your eyes: such is the character of a truly great painter.

"It is a melancholy reflection to a painter, who has ambition, to think that a picture, painted in the style and manner of the greatest masters, should not please the nation where he is obliged to live.

"Those who are novices in connoissance judge of a picture only by the name of the painter: others, more advanced in knowledge of art, have a desire to think differently from the rest of the world in respect to the most famous pictures; and again, from that partiality which men have to their own discoveries, will find out merits in pictures universally condemned.

"A real painter should be above any regard to pleasing the vulgar, whose judgment is solely governed by accident or caprice, and who are better pleased with a tawdry and false taste than with the pure, simple, and grand gusto of Raffaelle, which is too deep to be reached by their superficial imaginations; but artists should not be content with admiring the effect: let them carefully examine into the *causes;* and in so doing they will find more art and knowledge of nature than they are aware of."

"In addition," says Northcote, "to his several bold, because early, advances to a judicious and original style in portrait painting, I may also record one which I have seen,—a portrait painted at this time of a Captain Orme, aide-de-camp to General Braddock. This picture attracted much notice by its boldness and singularity. It is a full length, wherein a horse is represented at the side of the officer,—an effort in composition so new to his barren competitors in art as must have struck them with dismay; for they dared not venture on such

perilous flights of invention. It must be observed that it is a sombre picture, yet it possesses great merit."

The quickness of Sir Joshua's perception in availing himself of the accidents of nature is well illustrated by an anecdote which he has himself recorded in his manuscript remarks of this period. He had a picture of one of the old masters hanging up in his painting-room, to which he was himself particularly partial. "To support," he says, "my own opinion of the excellence of this picture by a high authority, I cannot forbear the temptation of mentioning that Lord ——, whilst I had the honour of painting his portrait, could not keep from turning his eyes from me, and fixing them on this picture in raptures, with such an expression in his countenance as may be imagined from a man of his tender feelings. I snatched the moment, and drew him, as he then appeared to me, in profile, with as much of that expression of a pleasing melancholy as my capacity enabled me to hit off: when the picture was finished he liked it, and particularly for that expression; though I believe without reflecting on the occasion of it."

In Newport Street Mr. Reynolds found his practice increasing so rapidly, that it became necessary to obtain some assistance; and he accordingly engaged Mr. Toms, an artist of much ability, whom Hogarth used to call Reynolds's drapery-man, to forward the preparation of his pictures. About the same time he also received Thomas Beach and Hugh Barron as pupils. His prices were now raised to a level with those of Hudson, and in a few years afterwards still farther increased.* His application, observes Fa-

* While Reynolds lived in St. Martin's Lane his prices were ten, twenty, and forty guineas, for the three usual orders of portraits, a head, or three quarters, a half length, and whole length.

rington, was great; having constantly occasion to receive five, six, or seven sitters daily; and some of these came frequently at the early hour of six in the morning; "such was his popularity, and the eager desire of numbers to have their apartments graced with productions which possessed the rare quality of uniting the most faithful resemblance to the happiest traits of expression. Yet notwithstanding this extraordinary pressure of commissions, his care and attention never relaxed, and the high reputation he had gained only made him more anxious to increase it. The same unabated desire of improvement occasioned frequent alterations in the progress of his pictures; and it was often long before he could satisfy himself."

During his residence in Newport Street, Reynolds painted his celebrated portrait of Lord Ligonier on horseback:—"A noble performance," says Farington, "which may be classed with any of his after productions for grandeur of composition and force of effect. He had not attained his thirty-sixth year when he executed this fine work, which showed at once his

---

Those of Hudson, at the same period, were twelve, twenty-four, and forty-eight guineas. Four or five years after Reynolds had adopted the prices of his master, they both raised them to fifteen, thirty, and sixty guineas. Northcote tells us, on the authority of a letter of Dr. Johnson, that in 1758 the price of Reynolds for a head was twenty guineas. It was, at this time, he continues, that Reynolds found his profession the most lucrative; as I have heard himself confess, that at that time he received six sitters in the day, and found it necessary to keep a list of the names of those who waited until vacancies occurred: he then received them in the order in which they were set down, and many of those portraits were sent home before the colours were dry. He also kept a portfolio in his painting-room, containing every print that had been taken from his portraits; so that those who came to sit had this collection to look over, and if they fixed on any particular attitude in preference, he would repeat it precisely, in point of drapery and position.

exquisite taste, and the depth of his knowledge in those parts of the art to which he had devoted his incessant attention. Nearly at the same period he painted a whole-length portrait of the Duchess of Hamilton, the beautiful Miss Gunning, and a smaller picture of her sister, the Countess of Coventry. He also began a portrait of the Duke of Marlborough; but the head only was finished when the Duke was ordered to join the army in Germany, whence he never returned.

"The variety afforded by the nature of his practice was happily suited to display the versatility of his genius. To the soldier, a character which he has always treated with peculiar energy, he could impart that individuality which distinguishes one man, and one hero, from another: in female beauty and grace — the delight of his pencil — he evinced the same power of discrimination; therefore not only the general characters of grave, gay, young, and old, but their several species, all contributed to supply the variety for which his productions were so remarkable. In fact, the capacities of portrait painting were never before completely developed.

"It might be thought," his biographer continues, "that the talents of Reynolds, to which no degree of ignorance or imbecility in the art could be insensible, added to his extraordinary reputation, would have extinguished every feeling of jealousy or of rivalship in the mind of his master, Hudson; but the malady was so deeply seated as to defy the usual remedies applied by time and reflection. Hudson, when at the head of his art, admired and praised by all, had seen a youth arise up and annihilate at once both his income and his fame; and he never could divest his mind of the feelings of mortification caused by the loss he had thus sustained. Hudson occasionally visited his pupil while he resided

in Newport Street: but neither his excellence nor his prosperity were calculated to produce pleasure; and therefore the intervals of his visits gradually enlarged, until they were altogether suspended, which took place twenty years before his death. The latter years of his life Hudson passed at a small villa he had built at Twickenham, where he died January 26. 1779, seventy-eight years of age."

About two years after his return from Italy, Reynolds was first introduced to Dr. Johnson, and their intimacy continued without interruption till the death of Johnson dissolved it. Accident made Reynolds acquainted with the talent of this extraordinary man, and furnished him with the opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance. Happening to meet with the life of Savage while in Devonshire, "he began to read it," as Boswell informs us, "while he was standing with his arm leaning against a chimney-piece. It seized his attention so strongly, that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move, he found his arm totally benumbed."

When Johnson resided in Castle Street, Cavendish Square, he used frequently to visit two ladies, who lived opposite to Mr. Reynolds in Newport Street,—Miss Cotterells, daughters of Admiral Cotterell; and, as Reynolds was also in the habit of visiting them, it was here, says Malone, that the acquaintance commenced. From the time that he first took up the life of Savage, Reynolds had imbibed a very high opinion of its author; and as he was no less delighted with Johnson's conversation, he gladly availed himself of the opportunity which offered itself, and "cultivated his acquaintance with the laudable zeal of one who was ambitious of general improvement. Sir Joshua was

lucky enough," continues Malone, " to make a remark at their very first meeting, which was so much above the common-place style of conversation, that Johnson at once perceived that Reynolds was in the habit of thinking for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend, to whom they owed great obligations; upon which Reynolds observed, ' You have, however, the comfort of being relieved from the burden of gratitude.' They were shocked a little at this alleviating suggestion as too selfish; but Johnson defended it in his clear and forcible manner, and was much pleased with the *mind*, the fair view of human nature, which it exhibited, like some of the reflections of Rochefoucault. The consequence was that he went home with Reynolds, and supped with him.

" Sir Joshua told me," Malone still continues, " a pleasant characteristical anecdote of Johnson about the time of their first acquaintance. When they were one evening together at the Miss Cotterells, the then Duchess of Argyle and another lady of high rank came in. Johnson, thinking that the Miss Cotterells were too much engrossed by them, and that he and his friend were neglected, as low company of whom they were ashamed, grew angry; and resolving to shock their supposed pride, by making their great visiters imagine they were low indeed, he addressed himself in a loud tone to Mr. Reynolds, saying, ' How much do you think you and I could get in a week if we were *to work as hard as we could?*' as if they had been common mechanics.*

* Northcote has recorded several whimsical anecdotes of Dr. Johnson, who, it is well known, was remarkably uncouth in his gait and action, and, at the same time, very slovenly in his dress; so much so as to attract the attention of passengers in the street. On one occasion he was annoyed by an impertinent fellow who noticed him, and insultingly imitated him in so marked and so ludicrous

"How much Reynolds profited by his acquaintance with this excellent and extraordinary man he intended

---

a manner that the Doctor himself could not avoid observing it, and proceeded, without loss of time, to resent the affront. "Ah!" said Johnson, who was a tall and a powerful man, "you are a very weak fellow, and I will convince you of it," when immediately he gave the man a blow, which knocked him out of the footpath into the dirty street, where he fell flat on his back, and the Doctor walked quietly on.

"A circumstance which Sir Joshua used to mention," continues his biographer, "relative to Dr. Johnson, will give an idea of the situation and mode of living of that great philosopher in the early part of his life.

"Roubiliac, the famous sculptor, desired of Sir Joshua that he would introduce him to Dr. Johnson, at the time when the Doctor lived in Gough Square, Fleet Street. His object was to prevail on Johnson to write an epitaph for a monument on which Roubiliac was then engaged for Westminster Abbey. Sir Joshua accordingly introduced the sculptor to the Doctor, they being strangers to each other, and Johnson received them with much civility, and took them up into a garret, which he considered as his library; in which, besides his books, all covered with dust, there was an old, crazy deal table, and a still worse and older elbow chair, having only three legs. In this chair Johnson seated himself, after having, with considerable dexterity, and evident practice, first drawn it up against the wall, which served to support it on that side on which the leg was deficient. He then took up his pen, and demanded what they wanted him to write. On this, Roubiliac, who was a true Frenchman, as may be seen by his works, began a most bombastic and ridiculous harangue on what he thought should be the kind of epitaph most proper for the purpose, all which the Doctor was to write down for him in correct language; when Johnson, who could not suffer any one to dictate to him, quickly interrupted him in an angry tone of voice, saying, 'Come, come, sir, let us have no more of this bombastic, ridiculous rhodomontade, but let me know, in simple language, the name, character, and quality of the person whose epitaph you intend me to write.'

"Such was the first interview," continues Northcote, "of two men, both eminent for genius; and of Roubiliac I may here record another anecdote respecting what took place on the return of that sculptor from Rome, when he paid a visit to Reynolds, and expressed himself in raptures on what he had seen on the Continent — on the exquisite beauty of the works of antiquity, and the captivating and luxuriant splendour of Bernini. 'It is natural

to have particularly mentioned in the discourse which, as I have already observed, he had it in contemplation to compose. 'I remember,' says he, 'Mr. Burke, speaking of the essays of Sir Francis Bacon, said, he thought them the best of his works. Dr. Johnson was of opinion "that their excellence and their value consisted in being the observations of a strong mind operating upon life; and, in consequence, you find there what you seldom find in other books." It is this kind of excellence which gives a value to the performances of artists also. It is the thoughts expressed in the works of Michel Angelo, Correggio, Raffaelle, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothic masters, and not the inventions of Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Marati, Luca Giordano, and others that I might mention, which we seek after with avidity. From the former, we learn to think originally. May I presume to introduce myself on this occasion, and even to mention as an instance of the truth of what I have remarked, the very discourses which I have had the honour of delivering from this place? Whatever merit they have must be imputed in a great measure to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would be to the credit of these discourses if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them; but he qualified my mind to think justly. No man had, like him, the faculty of teaching inferior minds the art of thinking. Perhaps other men might have equal knowledge, but few were so communicative. His great

to suppose,' said he, 'that I was infinitely impatient till I had taken a survey of my own performances in Westminster Abbey, after having seen such a variety of excellence, and by G—, my own work looked, to me, meagre and starved, as if made of nothing but tobacco pipes.'"

pleasure was to talk to those who looked up to him: it was here he exhibited his wonderful powers. In mixed company, and frequently in company that *ought* to have looked up to him, many, thinking they had a character to support, considered it as beneath them to enlist in the train of his auditors; and to such persons he certainly did not appear to advantage, being often impetuous and overbearing. The desire of shining in conversation was in him, indeed, a predominant passion; and if it must be attributed to vanity, let it at the same time be recollected, that it produced that loquaciousness from which his more intimate friends derived considerable advantage. The observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on every thing about us, I applied to our art; with what success others must judge. Perhaps an artist in his studies should pursue the same conduct; and instead of patching up a particular work on the narrow plan of imitation, rather endeavour to acquire the art and power of thinking. On this subject I have often spoken: but it cannot be too often repeated that the general power of composition may be acquired; and when acquired, the artist may then lawfully take hints from his predecessors. In reality, indeed, it appears to me that a man must begin by the study of others. Thus Bacon became a great thinker by first entering into and making himself master of the thoughts of other men.'"

Johnson soon became a frequent visiter at Reynolds's house; coming often to dinner without any ceremony: but Miss Reynolds's tea-table was his greatest attraction; there he had the advantage of female society, which he loved to indulge in when ladies would listen without being too loquacious themselves. For Miss Reynolds "he had the highest respect and veneration, to such a degree," observes Northcote, "that some

years after his first acquaintance with Sir Joshua, when the company at Mr. Thrale's were speculating upon a microscope for the mind, Johnson exclaimed, 'I never saw one that would bear it except that of my dear Miss Reynolds; and hers is very near to purity itself.'*

"There is no doubt," continues his biographer, "that Miss Reynolds gained much of his good will by her good-humoured attention to his extraordinary predilection for tea; he himself saying that he wished his tea-kettle never to be cold: but Sir Joshua having once, whilst spending the evening at Mr. Cumberland's, reminded him of the enormous quantity he was swallowing, observing that he had drank eleven cups, Johnson replied, 'Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine; why then should you number up my cups of tea?'

"Johnson's extravagant fondness for this refreshment did not fail to excite notice wherever he went; and it is related, though not by Boswell, that whilst on his Scottish tour and spending some time at Dunvegan, the castle of the chief of the Macleods, the dowager Lady Macleod having repeatedly helped him until she had poured out sixteen cups, then asked him if a small basin would not save him trouble, and be more agreeable? 'I wonder, madam,' said he, roughly, 'why all the ladies ask me such questions; it is to save yourselves trouble, madam, and not me.' The lady

* It must, however, be remarked, that an intimacy with Johnson was always attended with a certain portion of inconvenience to persons whose time was much occupied, as his visits, to those he liked, were long, frequent, and very irregular in the hours. Reynolds, at that time, dined at four o'clock, and immediately after dinner tea was brought in for the Doctor, who, nevertheless, at the usual hour, again took his share of it. After supper, too, he was indulged with his favourite beverage, and he usually protracted his stay till twelve or one o'clock, often very much deranging, by his immobility, the domestic economy of the house.

was silent, and resumed her task. Every reader in this place will recollect the so-often told anecdote of his versification at Miss Reynolds's tea-table, when criticising Percy's Reliques, and imitating his ballad style:—

> " ' Oh, hear it, then, my Renny dear,
> Nor hear it with a frown,
> You cannot make the tea so fast
> As I can gulp it down.'

" Dr. Johnson's high opinion of Sir Joshua was formed at a very early period of their intimacy, and increased instead of diminishing through life. Once, at Mr. Thrale's, when Sir Joshua left the room, Johnson observed, ' There goes a man not to be spoiled by prosperity.' And on another occasion he said, ' A story is a specimen of human manners, and derives its sole merit from its truth: when Foote has told me something I dismiss it from my mind like a passing shadow: when Reynolds tells me something I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more.' "

In the year 1759 Mr. Reynolds produced his first literary efforts, consisting of three papers for the Idler, then conducted and chiefly executed by Johnson. They are the numbers 76. 79. and 82., and will be found attached to his discourses. " These papers," observes Northcote, " may be considered as a kind of syllabus of all his future discourses; and they certainly occasioned him some thinking in their composition. I have heard Sir Joshua say," he farther remarks, " that Johnson required them from him on a sudden emergency, and on that account he sat up the whole night to complete them in time; and by it he was so much disordered, that it produced a vertigo in his head.

" I may here add," Northcote continues, " that at the time when he contributed to the Idler, he also com-

mitted to paper a variety of remarks which afterwards served him as hints for his discourses; and from these unfinished memoranda I now insert a few of his first thoughts, evidently drawn up as matter of caution for himself.

"Avoid that insipidity which is very commonly the result when you take your ideas from any preceding master. Salvator Rosa saw the necessity of trying some new source of pleasing the public in his works. The world were tired with Claude Lorraine's and Gaspar Poussin's long train of imitators.

"Salvator, therefore, struck into a wild, savage kind of nature, which was new and striking. Sannazarius, the Italian poet, for the same reason substituted fishermen for shepherds, and changed the scene to the sea.

"The want of simplicity in the air of the head, the action of the figure, and colour of the drapery, is destructive of dignity. If a painter has a true taste for simplicity, it will be discovered in every part of his work, even his colouring: there is a pure, chaste modesty, as it may be called, in opposition to a bold, impudent, glaring colour, such as you see in ordinary painters' works.

"Indeed the want of simplicity is the prevailing error in most painters respecting their works. They are apt to think they can never enrich their pictures too much; their colours are gaudy in the extreme: but what I particularly object against is the violent love that almost all of them have for contrast; and I dare say there is scarcely a painter but thinks he can never contrast his figures too much.

"The French writers on painting, which are the best we have, are fond of talking of contrast. 'If one figure,' says Du Piles, 'is with the face towards you,

let the next to it show his back.' Those rules can only proceed from a narrow-minded mechanical artist, and not from one who has studied nature, the antique, Raffaelle, or the Caracci. I do not mean to say that such contrast will always have a mean effect; but to establish it as an inviolable rule is absurd, and tends to destroy the greatest beauty of a painting, which should represent pure, unaffected nature. By means of those studied contrasts no figure so placed can appear eager and intent on what he is about. It gives also a hurry and confusion to the composition of the picture, and of consequence the same hurry of imagination to the spectator, and deprives the work of its most noble quality, which is the majesty of repose.

"When I think of this high principle of the art, it always brings to my mind the finest pictures at Bologna by Ludovico Caracci, and the transfiguration by Raffaelle. In this last every figure is animated, ardent, and intent on what he is engaged in, but still with dignity: then there is also a certain solemnity pervading the whole picture which must strike every one with awe and reverence that is capable of being touched by any excellence in works of art.

"When I have stood looking at that picture from figure to figure, the eagerness, the spirit, the close, unaffected attention of each figure to the principal action, my thoughts have carried me away that I have forgot myself, and for that time might be looked upon as an enthusiastic madman; for I could really fancy the whole action was passing before my eyes. How superior is this power of leading captive the imagination to that of producing natural drapery! Although so natural, as the phrase is, it looks as if you could take it up. A picture having this effect on the spectator, he need not ask his cicerone whether it is a good pic-

ture or not, nor endeavour to criticise it by the help of any rules he may have learned from books.

"But whilst others only admire the work, it is the artist's business to examine from whence this effect proceeds. I will take the liberty of giving a hint; others may carry it farther. The solemnity that the picture first strikes you with proceeds from its not having too much light, for the same reason that the light of the evening is more solemn than the gay sun at noonday: consequently he who would attempt the heroic style in painting should never set his figures in bright sunshine; and it is for this reason I have often said that Rubens's colouring, although a much more esteemed colourist than Raffaelle, would degrade and ruin Raffaelle's pictures.

"Another excellence in the picture of the Transfiguration is the noble kind of harmony of the colouring,—a quality, perhaps, this picture has never been remarked for before. It is one of the vulgar errors to imagine that a picture can never have too much harmony: hence painters, by breaking their colours too much, reduce their picture to be an imitation of a painting on a lady's fan, and entirely destroy its effect when seen at any distance; those broken colours being too weak to preserve their proper degree of force. For instance, the works of Luca Giordano, by an overfondness for this sort of harmony, when they are placed at a distance from the spectator, look altogether like the colour of milk and water. A very close comparison may be made between the harmony of music and that of painting. Music of the soft, gentle, and delicate kind, intended to be heard best when near, requires the notes to be soft, and fall gently into each other, without any harshness in their extremes; whilst, on the

contrary, the more masculine and noble style of music, such as marches, &c., should be bold and loud.

"The same rule applies to poetry. The smooth numbers of Pope are not so grand as the masculine style of Milton and Shakspeare.

"Rembrandt was harmonious rather too much; he wanted opposition. Luca Giordano was often the same, but wanted that fine taste of colouring. Berghem was too red.

"There cannot be found a better instance of breadth and distinctness of light and shadow than in a figure by Fiamingo in the church of St. Peter at Rome,—a full-length statue of St. Bartholomew, four times the size of life. The other statues which are near it appear all of a mass, and make neither light nor shadow.

"It is absolutely necessary that a painter, as the first requisite, should endeavour, as much as possible, to form to himself an idea of perfection, not only of beauty, but of what is perfection in a picture. This conception he should always have fixed in his view; and unless he has this view we shall never see any approaches towards perfection in his works; for it will not come by chance.

"If a man has nothing of that which is called genius, that is, if he is not carried away, if I may so say, by the animation, the fire of enthusiasm, all the rules in the world will never make him a painter.

"He who possesses genius is enabled to see a real value in those things which others disregard and overlook. He perceives a difference in cases where inferior capacities see none; as the fine ear for music can distinguish an evident variation in sounds which to another ear, more dull, seem to be the same. This

example will also apply to the eye in respect to colouring.

"One who has a genius will comprehend in his idea the whole of his work at once; whilst he who is deficient in genius amuses himself with trifling parts of small consideration, attends with scrupulous exactness to the minuter matters only which he finishes to a nicety, whilst the whole together has a very ill effect.

"A painter should have a solid foundation in the principles of his art; so as to be able to vindicate his works whenever they may be unjustly censured; and not of such an unstable judgment as to estimate the merit of his pieces by the money they will bring him. The most general rule in the choice of subjects fit for the purpose of the art is that of Horace:—

> "'Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,
> Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.'"

Such were the desultory thoughts of one whose practice was in strict accordance with his theory, and whose works will convince us how pure are the sources from which his views of art have been derived.

In the beginning of the year 1760 Reynolds once more changed his residence, and established himself in a house in Leicester Square, which he inhabited during the remainder of his life; but finding it, though large and respectable, still insufficient for his professional purposes, he was induced to erect a detached gallery, painting rooms, and such other places of accommodation as his extensive practice required. Here he again raised his prices to twenty-five, fifty, and one hundred guineas; and engaged several other drapery painters to assist him. "I have heard him observe," says

Northcote, "that no man ever acquired a fortune by the work of his own hands alone."

The same biographer observes, with respect to the permanent residence which he fitted up in Leicester Square, "It may, perhaps, be gratifying to young beginners in the art to be informed of some minute particulars concerning the apparatus of a painter who was so successful and became so illustrious in his profession.

"His painting room was of an octagonal form, about twenty feet long, and about sixteen in breadth. The window which gave the light to this room was square, and not much larger than one half the size of a common window in a private house, whilst the lower part of this window was nine feet four inches from the floor. The chair for his sitters was raised eighteen inches from the floor, and turned round on castors. His pallets were those which are held by a handle, not those held on the thumb. The sticks of his pencils were long, measuring about nineteen inches. He painted in that part of the room nearest the window, and never sat down when he worked."

If the student should be equally accurate in measuring the extent of advantages to be derived from the study of Reynolds's works, as his pupil has been in the dimensions of his painting room and apparatus, he will now be well prepared with materials for the opening of his professional career.

We may add to the preceding details, that "Sir Joshua rose early, breakfasted at nine, entered his study at ten, examined designs or touched unfinished portraits till eleven brought a sitter, painted till four, then dressed, and gave the evening to company."

On removing to Leicester Square Reynolds set up a handsome carriage, embellished in the ornamental

manner of the time, and on the panels were painted the four seasons of the year, very well executed, says Northcote, by Charles Catton, R. A., the most eminent coach-painter of his day. At the period alluded to the panels of coaches exhibited many interesting specimens of art, and the coach-painter required, in a great degree, the same professional education as the painter of history. Poetic and allegorical subjects were frequently required on these occasions, and they were executed with a taste of colour and design, and a freedom and delicacy of pencil, which were rarely displayed in the works of those artists, of the same period, who devoted themselves exclusively to the higher branches of the profession. Several painters, who afterwards ranked high in the art as members of the Royal Academy, began their career in this department; indeed, at that time, it may be said to have afforded the best of the few opportunities of employing his pencil with advantage which presented themselves to the rising artist.

Sir Joshua's coachman often got money by admitting the curious to a sight of his carriage, which probably displayed more fancy than usual; and when Miss Reynolds observed that it was rather too showy, Sir Joshua replied hastily, "What! would you have one like an apothecary's carriage?"

The expenses of this new establishment exhausted almost the whole of the property which Reynolds had previously realised by his profession; but he felt himself secure of the future, for he now stood unrivalled as a portrait painter, and that branch of the art which he excelled in was sure to meet with liberal encouragement. He continued to exert himself with unabated zeal and assiduity, and his fame and his fortune increased in proportion.

Reynolds's table was now elegantly furnished, " and round it," says Cunningham, " men of genius were often found. He was a lover of poetry and poets: they sometimes read their productions at his house, and were rewarded by his approbation, and occasionally by their portraits. Johnson was a frequent and a welcome guest. Percy was there, too, with his ancient ballads and his old English lore; and Goldsmith with his latent genius, infantine vivacity, and plum-coloured coat. Burke and his brothers were constant guests, and Garrick was seldom absent, for he loved to be where greater men were. It was honourable to this distinguished artist," continues Mr. Cunningham, " that he perceived the worth of such men, and felt the honour which their society shed upon him; but it stopped not here — he often aided them with his purse, nor insisted upon repayment. It has, indeed, been said that he was uncivil to Johnson, and that once, on seeing him in his study, he turned his back on him and walked out; but to offer such an insult was as little in the nature of the courtly painter as to forgive it was in that of the haughty author.* Reynolds seems

* In allusion to a circumstance mentioned by Northcote, which occurred at an early period of their acquaintance, he tells us that Johnson " frequently called in the evening, and remained to a late hour, when Sir Joshua was desirous of going into new company, after having been harassed by his professional occupations the whole day. This sometimes overcame his patience to such a degree, that one evening in particular, on entering the room where Johnson was waiting to see him, he immediately took up his hat, and went out of the house. Reynolds hoped by this means," continues Northcote, " that he would have been effectually cured; but Johnson persevered, and at last gained his friendship."

In a similar manner he acquired that of Richardson, whose friendship he was desirous of cultivating, " and with this view paid him frequent visits. These," says Northcote, " were received very coldly by Richardson; 'but,' observed the Doctor, in speaking of this to a friend, 'I was determined to persevere till I had gained my point; because I knew very well that when I had once over-

to have loved the company of literary men more than that of artists: he had little to learn in his profession, and he naturally sought the society of those who had knowledge to impart. They have rewarded him with their approbation: he who has been praised by Burke, and who was loved by Johnson, has little chance of being forgotten."

Mr. Cunningham tells us elsewhere that "artists are very willing to claim for their profession rather more than the world seems disposed to concede;" but we think that on this occasion the author himself indulges in the failing which he seems to consider as peculiar to painters. The eulogy of Dryden did little with posterity for Kneller, and the friendship and highly coloured flattery of Pope could not rescue the works of Jervas from oblivion. Their encomiums will never do more than they have done for the artists on whom they were lavished; and if Reynolds has failed to immortalise *himself*, he will be but little indebted to the affection of Johnson, or the praises of Edmund Burke, for higher claims to professional eternity. The talent and celebrity of the artist drew around him kindred spirits in literature, who would have been summoned in vain by the agency of inferior powers; and they cannot be said to have shed greater lustre on Reynolds than he reflected back upon them. Sir Joshua was not a mere mechanic in art: he was no manufacturer of faces, as many of his immediate predecessors had been. He was indebted for his fame to the strength of his intellect, and the refinement of his taste and his feeling. He could boast of a mind that

---

come his reluctance and shyness of humour, our intimacy would contribute much to the happiness of both.' The event verified the Doctor's prediction."

was highly susceptible of the beauties of elegant literature; and though his acquirements were not in proportion to the capacity which he displayed of acquiring, yet they were fully sufficient to enable him to appreciate the value of minds that were more highly cultivated than his own, and to suggest to them matter, not connected with his art, of which they themselves have acknowledged the importance.

The period at which we have now arrived was distinguished by a memorable event in the annals of British art. In the year 1760 the first public exhibition was opened for the reception of the works of modern painters, sculptors, and architects, who had till then been unprovided with efficient means of making themselves generally known. The first exhibition was so satisfactory to the public, and its results so beneficial to those who contributed to it, that it was shortly afterwards succeeded by another. In a letter to Baretti, Johnson thus alludes to it: — "The artists have established a yearly exhibition of pictures and statues, in imitation, I am told, of foreign academies. This year was the second exhibition. They please themselves much with the multitude of spectators, and imagine that the English school will rise much in reputation. Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands, which he deserves, among other excellences, by retaining his kindness for Baretti. This exhibition has filled the heads of the artists and lovers of art. Surely life, if it be not long, is tedious; since we are forced to call in the assistance of so many trifles to rid us of our time — of that time which can never return."

The feeling with which the latter sentence is written has been attributed by some to "that kind of envy which, perhaps, even Johnson felt, when comparing his

own annual gains with those of his more fortunate friends." Others have supposed that it is "rather to be attributed to the sense and taste of Johnson, who could not but feel the utter worthlessness of the far greater part of the productions with which the walls of the exhibition room were covered." There is, probably, some truth in both these remarks; for though we do not think Johnson capable of envy, yet the success of an art which he considered as comparatively trifling, when contrasted with the hardly-earned and scanty profits which literature, even in his own giant hands, was too often doomed to be restricted to, might naturally have suggested a melancholy feeling, which would have been as naturally embodied by Johnson in the form of a moral reflection. With respect to the "worthlessness" of many of the productions alluded to, it is certain that the term has not been misapplied; for "the loaf and cheese that could provoke hunger, the cat and Canary bird, and the dead mackarel on a deal board," were among the most intellectual performances which three fourths of the exhibition consisted of; and, what was worse, "though men of enlightened minds could distinguish and appreciate what was excellent," yet "the admiration of the *many* was confined to subjects either gross or puerile, and commonly to the meanest efforts of intellect." At the same time, we think there is reason to believe that Johnson had very little feeling for an art of which he was more than usually ignorant, and that he really attached much less importance to it, even in its most comprehensive sense, than it is generally allowed to be entitled to.

"At the first exhibition opened by the artists, the catalogue," says Northcote, "was the ticket of admission by which whole companies could be admitted;

but this mode was found by experiment to produce little other than tumult, and it was then considered as absolutely necessary to demand one shilling admission from each person. Johnson, though he speaks so superciliously of the arts, yet willingly employed his pen in composing a preface to the catalogue, which was then given gratis: but as this was a new regulation, it was thought requisite by the artists to give reasons to the public for the alteration; and as Johnson has done this so well in his clear and forcible language, explaining the nature and intention of the exhibition, and also has given so essential a part of historical information in the region of the arts, I apprehend no apology can be necessary for inserting it in this place."

Preface to the Catalogue, as written by Dr. Johnson.

"The public may justly require to be informed of the nature and extent of every design for which the favour of the public is openly solicited. The artists, who were themselves the first promoters of an exhibition in this nation, and who have now contributed to the following catalogue, think it, therefore, necessary to explain their purpose and justify their conduct. An exhibition of the works of art, being a spectacle new in the kingdom, has raised various opinions and conjectures among those who are unacquainted with the practice of foreign nations. Those who have set their performances to general view, have too often been considered the rivals of each other; as men actuated, if not by avarice, at least by vanity, and contending for superiority of fame, though not for a pecuniary prize. It cannot be denied or doubted, that all who offer themselves to criticism are desirous of praise; this

desire is not only innocent, but virtuous, while it is undebased by artifice and unpolluted by envy; and of envy or artifice those men can never be accused, who, already enjoying all the honours and profits of their profession, are content to stand candidates for public notice, with genius yet unexperienced and diligence yet unrewarded; who, without any hope of increasing their own reputation or interest, expose their names and their works, only that they may furnish an opportunity of appearance to the young, the diffident, and the neglected. The purpose of this exhibition is not to enrich the artist, but to advance the art; the eminent are not flattered with preference, nor the obscure insulted with contempt; whoever hopes to deserve public favour is here invited to display his merit. Of the price put upon this exhibition some account may be demanded. Whoever sets his works to be shown, naturally desires a multitude of spectators; but his desire defeats its own ends, when spectators assemble in such numbers as to obstruct one another.

"Though we are far from wishing to diminish the pleasures, or depreciate the sentiments, of any class of the community, we know, however, what every one knows, that all cannot be judges or purchasers of works of art. Yet we have already found by experience, that all are desirous to see an exhibition. When the terms of admission were low, the rooms were thronged with such multitudes as made access dangerous, and frightened away those whose approbation was most desired.

"Yet, because it is seldom believed that money is got but for the love of money, we shall tell the use that we intend to make of our expected profits. Many artists of great abilities are unable to sell their works for their due price: to remove this inconvenience, an annual sale will be appointed, to which every man may send

his works, and them, if he will, without his name. Those works will be reviewed by the committee that conduct the exhibition; a price will be secretly set on every piece, and registered by the secretary; if this piece is sold for more, the whole price shall be the artist's; but if the purchasers value it at less than the committee, the artist shall be paid the deficiency from the profits of the exhibition."

The public exhibitions alluded to, which were the first that had ever been opened in this country, appear to have been accidentally suggested to the artists by whom they were established.

Before the institution of the Royal Academy, the artists of eminence residing in the metropolis had formed themselves into a corporate society, for which they afterwards obtained his Majesty's charter, on the 26th of January, 1765. They were enabled from the produce of subscriptions, advanced by the members themselves, to support a small academy in St. Martin's Lane, at which many artists of subsequent eminence received the rudiments of education in art.* British artists

* National schools, or academies, for the cultivation and encouragement of art, had long been established in Italy and France; but the first attempt towards the establishment of an academy in England was made by several artists, at the head of whom was Kneller, in the year 1711. Sir James Thornhill afterwards formed an academy at his own house in the Piazza, Covent Garden; but this was only of ten years' duration, and died away in 1734. The artists were then obliged to seek a new establishment, which it was at that time peculiarly difficult to fix upon; for such was the ignorance of the day, that meetings of individuals for the object of study were suspected of being held for immoral purposes. After the death of Sir James Thornhill, some attempts were made to continue the meetings which he had originated; but of the failure or success of these attempts we have now no authentic information. The artists, however, did not long remain in this unsettled state; for a few of them, chiefly foreigners, finding themselves without the advantage of living models, formed a small society, and established regular meetings for study in a convenient

had hitherto met with very little encouragement; and were, for the most part, reduced to seek the little which they had from dealers in pictures, who undertook to recommend their works to those who frequented their shops, and appear to have made greater profit by them than the artists who committed them to their charge; while, at the same time, they studiously concealed the address of the artist from the purchaser.

After many ineffectual attempts to amend their precarious and dependent situation, they thought of establishing a public academy, as the most likely means of attracting general notice, and facilitating improvement in their respective professional studies. But the ac-

---

apartment in Greyhound Court, Arundel Street, part of the house of Mr. Peter Hyde, who was himself a painter, and afterwards went to Philadelphia. Mr. Moser was the principal conductor of this establishment, which soon attracted the attention of contemporary artists, and was visited by Hogarth, Wills, Ellis, and others, who were so well pleased with the nature of the arrangements, and the propriety with which the whole establishment was conducted, that a general union of the artists took place, and it became necessary to seek for more extensive accommodation. How long the artists remained in Greyhound Court cannot now be ascertained; but they removed at length to Peter's Court, St. Martin's Lane, and it is known that they were settled there before the year 1739. In this situation the academy continued till the year 1767, when the artists removed to Pall Mall. The institution of the Royal Academy in the year 1768, reduced the number of the associated artists, and the greater part of those most distinguished by their talents became members of that institution. The schools of the new establishment offered greater advantages than had been previously enjoyed by any others, and they shortly became the only ones of any importance in the country.

It should, however, be remembered that, for all the advantages of study which have here been enumerated, the artists of England have been solely indebted to their own unremitting exertions. Without any assistance from the government of their country, they have struggled successfully through greater difficulties than have ever presented themselves to the artists of other nations; and whatever may have been their dissensions among themselves, they have ever united in advancing an art which has been systematically neglected.

complishment of this object, however desirable, was found to be attended with so many difficulties, that after several fruitless attempts to procure assistance from the Dilettante and other societies, they were obliged to relinquish the idea. Accident, however, as we have already stated, eventually suggested to them the means of improving their condition, which had latterly appeared to be hopeless. The society was accustomed to hold an annual meeting at the Foundling Hospital, to commemorate the landing of King William; and as several of their body had made donations to this establishment of pictures, works of sculpture, &c., it was observed that the artists who had so contributed, became, in consequence, more generally known than others; and this remark first suggested the idea of an annual and public exhibition. Encouraged by this prospect, they lost no time in making the necessary arrangements; and the managing committee, who first proposed the plan, were directed by the general body to issue proper notices of their intention. The performances of many ingenious men, who had hitherto been unknown to the society itself, were forwarded at the time appointed; and on the 21st of April, 1760, an exhibition was opened at the great room belonging to the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, in the Strand, and attended with a degree of success which exceeded their most sanguine expectations. All were delighted with the fortunate result of the scheme, and a new and pleasing prospect seemed to open to the arts and the artists. Connoisseurs and picture-dealers were no longer in question; the public now knew where to find those whose works had attracted their attention, and could apply to the artists themselves without the intervention of agents.

The artists now exerted their powers to the utmost;

great improvement was observed in each succeeding exhibition, and the attention and encouragement of the public was found to be proportionably excited. The profits which resulted were more than sufficient to defray the expenses of the society; and they were not only enabled to relieve their less fortunate brethren, their widows, and children, but to lay up a fund for future occasions.

It is natural to conclude that the greatest artist in the country was not indifferent to the success of a plan which promised to be so extensively useful, and four of Reynolds's pictures were accordingly sent to the new exhibition, and there for the first time placed before the public, with whom, by the channel now opened, he continued in constant intercourse as long as he lived.

The second exhibition was in a spacious room near the Spring Garden entrance into the Park; and there Reynolds sent his fine portrait of Lord Ligonier on horseback, a portrait of Sterne, and three others. To the third exhibition he sent his picture of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy, and two other portraits, and with the exception, we believe, of a single year, continued his annual contributions till the establishment of the Royal Academy opened a wider field for exertion, and a more extensive prospect to the arts.

What had already been done was, however, important. "The works of English artists," observes Mr. Farington, "had been hitherto seen only by a few, and the greater part of the community knew absolutely nothing of what was passing in the arts. Private collections were then inaccessible, and there were no public ones, nor any casual display of the productions

of genius except what the ordinary sales by auction occasionally afforded."*

As the arts of the country continued to improve by competition and general encouragement, so the national taste was observed to rise in proportion to the changes effected. "The history of our exhibitions," Farington continues, "affords the strongest evidence of their impressive effect upon public taste. At their commencement, though men of enlightened minds could distinguish and appreciate what was excellent, the admiration of the *many* was confined to subjects either gross or puerile, and commonly to the meanest efforts of intellect; whereas at this time the whole train of subjects most popular in the earlier exhibitions have disappeared. The loaf and cheese that could provoke hunger, the cat and canary bird, and the dead mackerel on a deal board, have long ceased to produce astonishment and delight; while truth of imitation now finds innumerable admirers, though com-

* The private collection of one noble individual did, however, contribute materially to the advancement of art.

The Duke of Richmond, soon after his return from his travels, opened an admirable school for the study of painting and sculpture at his own house in Privy Gardens. It consisted of a gallery, fitted with every convenience for the accommodation of students, and furnished with a number of casts from the antique and modern figures at that time in Rome and Florence. To this elegant school young artists were invited by a public advertisement, and such as availed themselves of so desirable an opportunity acquired a purer taste in the knowledge of the human form than the artists of England had before enjoyed the means of cultivating; for the gallery of the Duke of Richmond was the first school opened to the country where the beauties of the antique could be studied.

The arts have also been much indebted to the Dilettante Society, and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, which, previous to the establishment of the Royal Academy, contributed greatly to the advance and encouragement of art.

bined with the high qualities of beauty, grandeur, and taste.

" To our public exhibitions, and to arrangements that followed in consequence of their introduction, this change must be chiefly attributed. The present generation appears to be composed of a new, and, at least with respect to the arts, a superior order of beings. Generally speaking, their thoughts, their feelings and language differ entirely from what they were sixty years ago. No just opinions were at that time entertained on the merits of ingenious productions of any kind. The state of the public mind, incapable of discriminating excellence from inferiority, proved incontrovertibly that a right sense of art in the spectator can only be acquired by long and frequent observation; and that, without proper opportunities to improve the mind and the eye, a nation would continue insensible of the true value of the fine arts.

" The artists had now proved the efficacy of their plan; and their income, which exceeded their expenditure, affording a reasonable hope of a permanent establishment, they thought themselves entitled to solicit a royal charter of incorporation; and having applied to his majesty for that purpose, he was pleased to assent to their request. This measure, however, which was intended to consolidate the body of artists, was of no avail; on the contrary, it was probably the cause of its dissolution; for in less than four years a separation took place, which led to the establishment of the Royal Academy, and finally to the extinction of the Incorporated Society.

" The dissolution of the incorporated body of artists was owing to the indiscriminate admission of members. At the period of the separation the number amounted to one hundred and forty-one; of whom a large pro-

portion were, necessarily, of a very inferior order. When the society was first instituted, due respect was shown to the eminent artists, who, by the propriety of their conduct, and the esteem in which they were held, gave dignity to it; and, by their excellent performances, contributed much to the popularity of the exhibitions. They were, therefore, for a while, considered to be the persons most proper to have a large share in the government of the society. While that sentiment prevailed, it proceeded with success. But it was not long before ambitious desires began to operate; and the votes at elections, being equal, many of the members who had little title to confidence and distinction aspired to the direction of the institution; and by combining together, they were by their numbers enabled to effect their purpose. They ejected two-thirds of the respectable members who filled the offices of trust, and placed themselves in their room; and forming a majority, outvoted those whom they had permitted to remain. The principal artists (of whom Reynolds was one), seeing the impossibility of restoring order and proper subordination, after some vain attempts, soon withdrew from this society, and without delay formed another plan, in which they avoided the errors which caused the destruction of the incorporated body they had quitted. It was now seen that no society of this kind could be lasting, unless it were more limited in its number and select in the choice of its members; and that it could have no national dignity without the avowed and immediate patronage of the sovereign. Happily there were artists among the seceding members who, in the situations in which they were placed, had opportunity to state these sentiments to his majesty, who graciously approved the proposal submitted to him, and directed that the plan should

be carried into execution; and thus in a short time the Royal Academy was established.

"During the dissensions in the Incorporated Society, Mr. Reynolds took no active part; and his apparent neutrality caused it to be believed that he did not approve of the proceedings of those who retired from it. On the subject of the disunion Mr. Strange, the celebrated engraver, published a book, in which he bitterly arraigned the conduct of those who had seceded; and, in his account of the cause and effect of the separation, he states that Mr. Reynolds said — 'He would not exhibit with either society,' and he proceeded to reproach him with having given up this resolution when tempted with the offer of the presidency of the Royal Academy then forming, and an assurance that he would receive the honour of knighthood."

It must be confessed that, on the face of this *exparte* statement, the conduct of Reynolds was not marked with that propriety by which it was usually distinguished. But if we look to the other side of the question, it is clear that the government of the Incorporated Society of Artists was either very badly or very loosely administered. It would seem that a party of interested and ambitious men, with no regard for the general welfare of the Institution, or for the mutual good understanding of its members, were suffered to disturb it with continual broils, and to make the offices which they held, or the numerical superiority which they possessed, the means of increasing their power, to the detriment of the rest of the associated artists, and to the prejudice of the respectability of the society as a body. Occasional irregularities may be expected to occur in all instances where men of opposite views and principles are brought unavoidably together, the most active and enterprising will

generally be foremost, and unless they are restrained by salutary and effective laws, enforced with judicious discrimination, and with the necessary promptitude and decision, may be encouraged to take advantage of their favourable position, and to menace the independence of their associates. But, in the instance before us, the long continuance of irregular proceedings, often complained of but never redressed, seems to indicate that either the laws were inefficient, or that they were but very feebly administered. The same causes might be expected to operate, on all future occasions, on the same body of individuals, and the expulsion of one set of intriguing men would only serve to make room for another as dangerous. Reynolds probably foresaw that no essential improvement could reasonably be expected in the government of the society he belonged to, and that the arts themselves would be degraded in proportion to the weakness of those who were apparently unfit or unable to uphold them. The plan on which the new Institution was founded might be supposed to hold out better hopes of its rational government. But Reynolds could not be induced to become a member of it, although he had withdrawn himself from the rival society, till it was firmly established on a basis which could not be shaken, and supported by royal encouragement and protection. When this was accomplished, there were grounds for believing that the Royal Academy would be a national benefit, and he yielded to the pressing solicitations of its members in accepting the office of president.

That the prospect of knighthood, and the presidency of the Royal Academy, was not beheld by Mr. Reynolds with indifference, we are fully prepared to allow; but that these advantages alone could have tempted him to abandon a society of which he had professed

himself the friend and supporter, we cannot persuade ourselves to admit. We cannot discover in his conduct on the occasion any circumstances tending to confirm such an opinion; and we find in the general estimation of his character sufficient grounds for inducing us to reject it, unless supported by evidence much stronger than that which has fallen under our observation. Indeed, his conduct throughout appears to have been not only consistent, but uniformly regulated by good sense and good feeling, never placed in opposition to each other; and few men, perhaps, have ever united these qualities with greater advantage, or preserved them so invariably without the sacrifice of either, from the commencement to the close of his career.

In the hope of advancing the interests of the art, while he forwarded his own honest views of advancement, he enrolled himself a member of the society of artists, and continued to support it by every means in his power while it was possible to do so with effect. When he found that its government was badly administered, and left entirely in the hands of ambitious and designing men, who consulted their own private interests alone while they sacrificed those of the society, he refused to act longer in conjunction with them, and withdrew himself entirely from the discussion of measures which he could neither control nor approve. He still continued, however, to afford them the advantage of his works, and did not quit them while a prospect remained of any good to be derived from their existence as a body.

In the year 1762 Reynolds produced his celebrated picture of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy, for which the Earl of Halifax paid three hundred guineas. He had it long in contemplation, Northcote informs us,

to paint a picture of Garrick on a more extended scale, with the idea of displaying his various powers as an actor. The principal figure in the front was to have been a full length of Garrick, in his own proper dress, in the act of speaking a prologue, and surrounded by groups of figures representing him in all the different characters in which he excelled on the stage. This scheme Sir Joshua mentioned to Garrick at the time he was painting his portrait. The actor was delighted with the idea, and exclaimed, "That will be the very thing I desire; the only way, by ——, that I can be handed down to posterity." The picture, however, was never begun, and we may safely conclude, with Northcote, that Sir Joshua, "on mature consideration, foresaw that the subject was not *eminently* calculated to make a good composition for a painting."

On one occasion, when the Bishop of St. Asaph was sitting to Reynolds, the conversation turned on Garrick; and the Bishop asked how it was that the talents of this extraordinary actor had never had the effect of producing others to rival him, even in a moderate degree? "Partly," replied Sir Joshua, "because they all imitate him, and then it became impossible: as this was like a man's resolving to go always behind another; and while this resolution lasts, it renders it impossible that he should ever be on a par with him."

At another time, when Garrick was complaining to Sir Joshua of the daily sarcasms with which he was annoyed by Foote, the comedian, Reynolds answered that, in doing so, Foote gave the strongest proofs possible of sensibly feeling his own inferiority, as it was always the lesser man who condescended to become malignant and abusive.

In the autumn of the year 1762 Reynolds, having impaired his health by incessant application, again

paid a visit to his native country, accompanied by his friend Dr. Johnson, with whom he was entertained at the seats of several noblemen and gentlemen in the west of England. During their stay at Plymouth, they were the guests of Dr. John Mudge, then a surgeon, and afterwards an eminent physician of that town, for whom Sir Joshua had the greatest regard. To the father of this gentleman, we have already observed, Reynolds was materially indebted for the habit of thinking philosophically, and particularly for the power of abstract reasoning which he employed so successfully in his professional labours.

Sir Joshua gratified his companion with a sight of the Dock-yard and other parts of the naval establishment at Plymouth, and proposed a trip to the Eddystone light-house, which, however, the bad state of the weather prevented.

"It was about this time," observes Northcote, "that I first saw Sir Joshua; but I had seen several of his works which were in Plymouth (for at that time I had never been out of the county), and those pictures filled me with wonder and delight, although I was then very young; insomuch that I remember when Reynolds was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled, I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind."

A similar impulse of youthful enthusiasm urged Reynolds to press forward and touch the hand of Pope, and the feeling is as honourable to the pupil as to his instructor.* Having completed his little tour, and

* In the year 1771, Northcote was first placed under the tuition of Reynolds, to whom he was introduced, and strongly recommended by Dr. John Mudge. "If I might now be suffered to

succeeded in a great measure in the restoration of his health, Sir Joshua returned to his labour in the metropolis: indeed, says Northcote, he possessed the true

---

say a little of myself," says the enthusiastic pupil, "I would declare, that I feel it next to impossible to express the pleasure I received in breathing, if it may be so said, in an atmosphere of art; having, until this period, been debarred not only from the practice of the art itself, but even from the sight of pictures of any excellence, as the county of Devon, at that time, did not abound with specimens, and even those few which are scattered about that country I had no opportunity of ever seeing: and as from the earliest period of my being able to make any observation, I had conceived him (Sir Joshua) to be the greatest painter that ever lived, it may be conjectured what I felt when I found myself in his house as his scholar."

Young Northcote, says another biographer *, acquired skill rapidly under Sir Joshua: he, ere long, painted one of the female servants so like nature, that a tame macaw, a great favourite with Reynolds, and occasionally introduced into his pictures, mistook the painting for the original, against whom it had a grudge, and flew to attack the canvass with beak and wing. The experiment of the creature's mistake was several times repeated with the same success, and Reynolds compared it to the ancient painting, where a bunch of grapes allured the birds. "I see," said he, "that birds and beasts are as good judges of pictures as men."

"It seems remarkable, that of eight or nine pupils, some of whom, at their commencement, indicated considerable talent, Mr. Northcote should be the only one who has attained distinction. Possibly this fortunate exception," observes Mr. Farington, "was owing to his having sought that distinguished tuition at a later period of his life than is usual, and at a time, too, when his instructor was less occupied with commissions, and himself with a mind more disposed to reflection than might be reasonably expected at an earlier age.

"To those who have slightly considered the subject of education, and especially in art, the circumstance here alluded to must appear extremely paradoxical, although, in fact, it is precisely what might be expected. The school of Sir Joshua resembled a manufactory, in which the young men who were sent to him for tuition were chiefly occupied in copying portraits, or assisting in draperies and preparing back-grounds. The great pressure of his

---

* Mr. Cunningham.

enthusiasm of a profession in as great a degree, perhaps, as any man ever did; he never was so happy as when in his painting room, and has often confessed that when he has complied with the invitations of the nobility to spend a few days of relaxation with them at their country seats, though every luxury was afforded which could possibly be desired, "yet he always returned home like one who had been kept so long without his natural food, and that if he made a visit for three days, it required three days more on his return, before he could recover his usual train of thinking."

"The man will never make a painter," he was accustomed to say, "who looks for the Sunday with pleasure as an idle day."

None of Sir Joshua's hours were ever spent in idleness, or lost in dissipation; and on those evenings which he spent at home, after his daily occupation was past, he employed himself in looking over and studying from the prints of the old masters, of which he had procured a fine collection.

---

business required not only his own unceasing diligence, but that every hand he could command should be employed, to enable him to execute the numberless commissions that poured in upon him. The consequence was, that his pupils had very little time for deliberate study, and that which was left them after the application they had given in the day was usually spent in relaxation from labour."

In this manner years passed away without any solid improvement. While his pupils remained under the eye of their master, by constantly working upon or copying his pictures, they seemed to be doing much; but on their leaving him, they soon discovered their mistake in the total absence of all independent ability. Not having been sufficiently accustomed to think for themselves, they looked to his pictures for every thing; and submitting their minds to excellence so captivating, their thoughts extended no farther. Nature was seen by them only through his medium, and when deprived of that aid they gradually exposed their imbecility.

Among the friends in whose society his evenings were occasionally spent, the Cotterells were still numbered; and at their house he and Johnson were frequent visiters.

By a letter from Johnson to Barretti, written after the Doctor's return to the metropolis from his tour in the west of England, we find that Reynolds was then in the receipt of 6000*l.* a year. The expense of his establishment in Leicester Square has been calculated at 2000*l.* a year;—"a considerable sum," observes Farington, "according to the value of money at that time; but he wisely judged that to be a prudent expenditure, which procured him the advantages" of such society as he was in the habit of assembling round his table; among which "were daily seen, in larger or smaller numbers, poets, historians, divines, men celebrated for their scientific knowledge, philosophers, lovers of the arts, and others; Johnson and Goldsmith were of those who most frequently attended; and it was in such company that he gradually improved his mind, and formed his taste for literary composition," and his habit of thinking correctly.

"Such an example at the head of the arts," continues Mr. Farington, "had the happiest effect upon the members of the profession. At this time, a change in the manners and habits of the people of this country was beginning to take place. Public taste was improving. The coarse familiarity so common in personal intercourse was laid aside; and respectful attentions and civility in address gradually gave a new and better aspect to society. The profane habit of using oaths in conversation no longer offended the ear; and bacchanalian intemperance at the dinner-table was succeeded by rational cheerfulness and sober forbearance."

"No class of society manifested more speedy im-

provement than the body of artists. In the example set by Sir Joshua Reynolds, he was supported by some of his contemporaries, who were highly respected for the propriety of their conduct and gentlemanly deportment. So striking was the change, that a much-esteemed artist, far advanced in life, being a few years since at a dinner-table surrounded by men of his own profession, recollecting those of former times, remarked the great difference in their manners, adding, 'I now see only gentlemen before me." Such is the influence of good example."*

* "This notice of the great change in public manners and habits naturally produces a vivid recollection of some curious and extraordinary inconsistencies that prevailed, even in the highest ranks of society. It has been thought that attention to personal appearance has a moral good effect in tending to self-respect: there is, however, proof sufficient, that, though advantageous on many accounts, it contributes but little to elevate the mind to a sentiment corresponding with such studied care of outward show. One of the characteristics of the last age was splendour of dress in the higher orders, which was imitated throughout the subordinate classes of society as far as circumstances would allow. With this ostentation, there was much ceremony on public occasions; and in private intercourse a proportion of it was observed. The different orders of citizens were rigidly separated by a high carriage on the one part, and a careful forbearance on the other; yet, with all this apparent show and polish, much brutality was mingled, and great and general licentiousness pervaded all the ranks of the community!

"Hogarth, in depicting the character and manners of his day, has shown, in various of his scenes, that vice and debauchery triumphed every where — not in secrecy and concealment, but in the most open manner. The high-dressed beau and the low libertine were similar in profligate indulgence. Licentious conversation commonly made part, often the greatest part, of the amusement at the dinner-table, where hospitality usually ended in extreme intemperance. Such were the manners of the people little more than half a century ago.

"If other evidence were wanting, an obvious proof of this great moral amendment is to be found in the actual state of the drama. The productions of our later dramatists are free from the shameless grossness that too frequently debased the wit of our predecessors, and has left a stigma on the character of the age that

In the year 1764, Mr. Reynolds, in conjunction with Dr. Johnson, established the Literary Club; "a society," observes Malone, "which can boast of having had enrolled among them many of the most celebrated characters of the present century."

Reynolds was the first proposer of these meetings; and the number of the members selected was originally confined to twelve. "These were men of such talent," continues Malone, "and so well known to each other, that any two of them, if they should happen to be joined by more, were presumed to be good company for each other.

The original members were Mr. Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Langton, Mr. Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, the Honourable Topham Beauclerc,

---

could tolerate it. Within the same period, the formalities of etiquette and dress have been materially relaxed; perfect freedom of manners has been reconciled with perfect decorum; the orders of society have been blended, and the distinctions of rank gradually softened by an easy unrestrained intercourse.

"It would not be difficult to show that the general reformation of mind and manners has not confined itself to the circles of private life; but, in union with public spirit, it has displayed itself in the foundation of numerous societies for the diffusion of knowledge and the cultivation of industry, the relieving the distresses and correcting the vices incident to human nature.

"In the benefits derived from the improved state of society the fine arts have largely participated. They may, perhaps, be said to have in some degree contributed their assistance in the great work of moral reform, inasmuch as the direction which productions of art give to the public mind tends to refine as well as to amuse. The Royal Academy and the British Institution — establishments originating in the patriotic exertions of private individuals — have received the sanction of royal patronage, and the reward of public favour and encouragement.

"Thus, those arts which are calculated to aid and illustrate religion and morality, to gratify the feelings of affection by preserving the images of love and attachment; to display the beauties of nature in all her variety, and to embellish and ornament a great country; are now cherished with a liberal regard to their value."

and Dr. Goldsmith: Mr. Samuel Dyer, Sir Robert Chambers, and Lord Charlemont were soon afterwards elected.*

The names mentioned below, of the early members of the Literary Club, should be fully sufficient to convey an idea of its brilliant assemblage of talent; but if other proof be wanting, the following letter from Sir William (then Mr.) Jones will afford it:—

Mr. Jones to the Bishop of St. Asaph.

"November 23. 1780.

"My Lord,—Had I not been prevented by particular business from writing to your Lordship on Tuesday evening and yesterday, I would have informed you before, that we had done ourselves the honour (and a very great one we shall esteem it) of electing your Lordship a member of our club. The election was, of course, unanimous, and it was carried with the sincere

* They at first met once a week, on Monday evenings, at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street; but in the year 1775, instead of supping together once a week, they agreed to dine together once a fortnight during the sitting of parliament; and the number of the members gradually increased to thirty-five; but was limited, Malone says, to forty. Garrick and Coleman, Gibbon, Sir William Jones, Dr. Adam Smith, Mr. Thomas Warton, Lord Ashburton; Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph; Mr. Vesey; Dr. Hinchliffe, Bishop of Peterborough; Mr. Richard Burke, Mr. Boswell, the Marquess of Bath; Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore; Mr. Fox, Sir Charles Bunbury, Dr. George Fordyce, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir William Scott, Lord Spencer, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Windham, Mr. Steevens; Dr. Barnard, Bishop of Limerick; Dr. J. Warton; Dr. Marlay, Bishop of Waterford; Lord Ossory, Lord Lucan, Lord Eliot, Sir William Hamilton, Dr. Burney, Lord Palmerston, Dr. Warren, Lord Macartney, Mr. Courtenay, the Duke of Leeds; Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury; Sir Charles Blagden, Major Reynel, the Rev. Dr. Farmer, the Honourable Frederick North, and Mr. Malone, were members (at different periods) of this talented association; but twenty-one of the number were dead when the individual last mentioned published his life of Sir Joshua.

approbation and eagerness of all present. I am sorry to add, that Lord Camden and the Bishop of Chester were rejected. When bishops and chancellors honour us with offering to dine with us at a tavern, it seems very extraordinary that we should reject such an offer; but there is no reasoning on the caprice of men. Of our club, I will only say, that there is no branch of human knowledge on which some of our members are not capable of giving information; and I trust, that as the honour will be ours, so your Lordship will receive some pleasure from the company, once a fortnight, of some of our first writers and critics, as well as our most virtuous senators and accomplished men. I think myself highly honoured in having been a member of this society near ten years, and chiefly in having contributed to add such names to the number of our friends, as those of your Lordship and Lord Althorpe."

The Bishop's answer was as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,—You were prevented by Sir Joshua Reynolds in your kind intentions of giving me the earliest notice of the honour you have done me. I believe Mr. Fox will allow me to say that the honour of being elected into the Turk's Head Club is not inferior to that of being the representative of Westminster or Surrey. The electors are certainly more disinterested; and I should say they are much better judges of merit, if they had not rejected Lord Camden and chosen me.

"I flatter myself with the hopes of great pleasure and improvement in such society as you describe, which is the only club of which I ever wished myself a member."

Sir John Hawkins informs us that the celebrated Mrs. Montague invited the club for two successive

years to a dinner at her house. "Curiosity," he adds, "was her motive; and possibly a desire of intermingling with our conversation the charm of her own. She affected to consider us as a set of literary men, and perhaps gave the first occasion for distinguishing the society by the name of the 'Literary Club;' a distinction which it never assumed to itself."*

* About the year 1770, Sir Joshua, as mentioned by Mr. Cumberland, formed one of a very pleasant society, which, without having the name of a club, was accustomed to dine, on stated days, at the British Coffee-House. This society, he remarks, was composed of men of the first eminence for their talents; and, as there was no exclusion, by the regulations, of any member's friend or friends, the parties were continually enlivened by the introduction of new guests, who naturally furnished new sources of conversation, from which politics and party seemed, by general consent, to be decidedly proscribed. "Such a society," observes Northcote, "might no doubt have been highly agreeable; but its description, thus strongly marked by Mr. Cumberland, seems rather drawn up in contradistinction to the Literary Club, of which he was not a member. This society at the British Coffee-House must, however, with the exception of Johnson's conversation, have made him amends for exclusion from the other; for here were Foote, Fitzherbert, Garrick, Macpherson; Doctors Carlisle, Robinson, and Beattie; Caleb Whiteford; and though last, not least, Sir Joshua Reynolds, who introduced Goldsmith as a member immediately previous to the representation of 'She Stoops to Conquer.'

"It was about this time, too, that the so often told circumstance of the *Epitaphs* took place. The occurrences which led to this display of witticism," continues Northcote, "have been variously detailed; I shall, therefore, insert Mr. Cumberland's account of it, as it contains some particulars not otherwise generally known.

"He says, that it was on a proposal started by Edmund Burke, that a party of friends who had dined together at Sir Joshua's, and at his house, should meet at the St. James's Coffee-House; which accordingly took place, and the meeting was occasionally repeated with much festivity and good fellowship. Dr. Barnard, Dean of Derry; Dr. Douglas, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury; Johnson, Garrick, Sir Joshua, Goldsmith, Edmund and Richard Burke; Hickey, an attorney, an Irishman, and a friend of the Burkes', commemorated by Goldsmith; constituted the party. It was at one of these meetings that the idea was suggested of extempore epitaphs upon the parties present; and Garrick, off-hand, with a good deal of humour, wrote the epitaph upon poor Goldsmith, who was the first in *jest*, as he proved in *reality*, that was committed to

In the summer of the year 1765, Mr. Reynolds was attacked by a very violent and dangerous illness; it was not, however, of very long duration; and his recovery was cheered by the following affectionate letter from Dr. Johnson, at that time on a visit in Northamptonshire.*

"*To Joshua Reynolds, Esq., in Leicester Fields, London.*

"DEAR SIR,—I did not hear of your sickness till I heard likewise of your recovery; and therefore I es-

---

the grave. The Dean also gave him an epitaph; and Sir Joshua illuminated the Dean's verses with a sketch of his bust in pen and ink, which Mr. C. states to have been inimitably caricatured: but this does not appear to me like an act of Sir Joshua's, nor did I ever hear it mentioned by any other author.

"These circumstances were, of course, sufficient to prompt Goldsmith to his well-known poem of 'Retaliation,' which, however, was written with such good temper as to show that he was fully convinced of the pleasantries of his friend having been solely produced by the harmless mirth of the moment. It is probable that whoever reads this memoir," continues Northcote, "must have already seen that celebrated poem, yet still his delineation of Sir Joshua is too accurate to be omitted.

'Here Reynolds is laid; and to tell you my mind,
He has not left a better, or wiser behind;
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand,
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland;
Still born to improve us in every part,
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart;
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing;
When they talked of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.'"

These were the last lines, says Malone, that the author wrote. He had written half a line more of this character, when he was seized with the nervous fever which carried him in a few days to his grave. He intended to have concluded with his own character.

In addition to the lines of Goldsmith, Northcote has quoted some of Cumberland's on Sir Joshua, and an admirable *jeu d'esprit* of Caleb Whiteford's, replete with genuine humour.

* We may observe, that in this year England lost one of its brightest ornaments, in Hogarth.

caped that part of your pain, which every man must feel, to whom you are known as you are known to me. Having had no particular account of your disorder, I know not in what state it has left you. If the amusement of my company can exhilarate the languor of a slow recovery, I will not delay a day to come to you; for I know not how I can so effectually promote my own pleasure as by pleasing you, or my own interest as by preserving you; in whom, if I should lose you, I should lose almost the only man whom I call a friend Pray let me hear of you from yourself or from dear Miss Reynolds. Make my compliments to Mr. Mudge.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your most affectionate and

"Most humble servant,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

In 1765, Mr. Reynolds exhibited a whole-length portrait of Lady Sarah Bunbury, in which she is represented as sacrificing to the Graces. Previous to this, he had painted an excellent whole-length portrait of Lady Elizabeth Keppel, in the dress she wore as bridemaid to the Queen; and in the same exhibition he had another portrait of Lady Waldegrave: of which Mr. Barry, in a letter to Dr. Sleigh, says, "We have had two exhibitions since I wrote to you; the pictures that struck me most were Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces, and Lady Waldegrave; they are some of Mr. Reynolds's best works, which is the greatest character they can have."

It was in this year that Johnson's edition of Shakspeare made its appearance, for which he had published proposals in 1756, and had latterly shown but little inclination of fulfilling his engagements. The fact is (says Northcote), that Johnson had undertaken the

work at a period when he was obliged to be a literary drudge for his livelihood, and merely on account of the profits it would afford him; but it never was an object of his desire. In the mean time he became possessed of the pension of 300*l.* per annum, from the bounty of his Majesty George III.; and that task which before was undertaken from necessity only, now became loathsome to him, and he could not summon up sufficient resolution to go on with it. It was not till Sir Joshua and some others of his friends contrived to entangle him in a wager for its completion at a given period, that he could be prevailed on to sit down in earnest to the work, to which Reynolds himself contributed some notes, with the view, as Northcote imagines, of encouraging Johnson to proceed. In these efforts Reynolds showed his good sense and good feeling; and his deficiency on those points only, observes Mr. Cunningham, "where no one could have expected him to excel — black-letter reading and old dramatic lore. He had neither the daring ingenuity of a Warburton, nor the philosophical sagacity of a Johnson; but he tasted with as deep a feeling as either the rich excellence of the great dramatist."

"Artists of eminence now rose thick and fast. Barry had made his appearance under the affectionate patronage of Edmund Burke; West landed from Italy to exhibit himself in the character of an historical painter; and the names of others of scarcely less note began to be heard of. But the ascendency of Reynolds was still maintained: he had charmed effectually the public eye; and kept the world chained to him by the strong and endearing link of variety."

Wilson and Gainsborough at this time stood high in the art; but "the love of landscape painting spread very slowly; so slow," adds Mr. Cunningham,

" that, after the sale of a few of his works among the more distinguished lovers of the art, Wilson could not find a market for the fruits of his study, and had the mortification of exhibiting pictures of unrivalled beauty before the eyes of his countrymen in vain." Gainsborough was scarcely more successful: his best landscapes stood ranged in long lines from his hall to his painting-room; and they who came to sit to him for their portraits, for which he was chiefly employed, rarely deigned to honour them with a look as they passed them.

West's picture of " Pylades and Orestes," painted shortly after his arrival from Italy, and one of his very best works, was universally praised and admired, but no one offered to purchase it. " As any attempt in history," says Northcote, " was at that period an almost unexampled effort, this picture became a matter of much surprise. The painter's house was soon filled with visiters from all quarters to see it; and those among the highest rank, who were not able to come to his house to satisfy their curiosity, desired his permission to have it sent to them; nor did they fail, every time it was returned to him, to accompany it with compliments of the highest commendation on its great merits. But the most wonderful part of the story is," continues Northcote, " that, notwithstanding all this vast bustle and commendation bestowed upon this justly admired picture, by which Mr. West's servant gained upwards of thirty pounds for showing it; yet no one mortal ever asked the price of the work, or so much as offered to give him a commission to paint any other subject. Indeed, there was one gentleman so highly delighted with the picture, and spoke of it with such great praise to his father, that he immediately asked him the reason he did not purchase, as he so

much admired, it; when he answered, 'What could I do with it, if I had it? You would not surely have me hang up a modern English picture in my house, unless it were a portrait?'"

Cotes and Ramsay shared in some degree the public favour with Reynolds; "for each of those painters had employment from the Court, where Reynolds, as an artist, was never able to become a favourite. From that source of envied and enviable honour, he had not the happiness of receiving a single commission; for it is to be observed, that those exquisite portraits of the King and Queen, now in the council-room of the Royal Academy, were painted at the request of Reynolds himself, purposely for that place."*

* George III., even long after the death of Sir Joshua, was not an admirer of his works: he thought them coarse and unfinished; and, in particular, disliked that roughness of surface by which they are usually distinguished. This feeling was probably, in some degree, occasioned by the habit of looking at pictures closely, which, as his Majesty was very near sighted, he always indulged in when practicable; and it may also have partly originated in a taste for highly finished performances, in the usual acceptation of the term, in which smoothness of surface and minute attention to detail are generally among the leading characteristics. But whatever may have been instrumental in producing the feeling to which we allude, his Majesty has frequently expressed it to those artists who had the honour of access to his person: and on one occasion, a painter of eminence, who enjoyed a considerable share of royal patronage, took the liberty of suggesting, when encouraged to do so by his Majesty, that, unless they chance to be of very small dimensions, no pictures are intended to be looked at closely; and that, when removed to the proper distance from the eye, that roughness of surface to which the king objected, might contribute to their force and their brilliancy; that a too close inspection of any large picture would effectually prevent the spectator from embracing its merit as a whole; and that the general arrangement of Sir Joshua's pictures constituted one of their greatest beauties, and was the point to which he particularly devoted his attention, as being the most difficult of attainment and the most important in conducing to the proper effect of his work — even to that of its

Cotes lived only two years after the establishment of the Royal Academy, of which he was a member, and one of the four who signed the petition to his Majesty soliciting its foundation. Hogarth considered him superior to Reynolds as a portrait-painter; and if an exact and well-finished representation of nature must be considered as the highest excellence in art, the opinion of Hogarth was correct. The portraits of Cotes were artist-like fac-similes; and many of them have so striking an air of identity, that they might

---

detail.* His Majesty acknowledged the general truth of these remarks, but could never wholly divest himself of the prejudice which he had formerly entertained. Under such an impression, however, he conferred on Sir Joshua the honour of knighthood; and condescended to state that he wished him to resume the presidency of the Royal Academy, when circumstances had induced him to resign it. It reflects the highest honour on George III., that he did not allow his own private feeling to operate on those occasions; and that he was able to sacrifice it to public opinion, and to the laudable desire of promoting the arts and encouraging the artists of his realm. To his Majesty alone, without any recommendation, or any assistance from his ministers, we are indebted for the institution of the Royal Academy; the expenses of which, to a considerable amount, were supplied from the king's privy purse, till the profits of the Exhibition enabled its members to provide for the wants of the establishment. Charles I. had a higher relish for the beauties of art, and may be said on that account to have gratified his own private feeling in the encouragement which he afforded to it: but George III., under the influence of a less powerful stimulus of this nature, and actuated chiefly by a sense of public good, and a just impression of what is expected from the head of a powerful nation, did more for the honour and advantage of the country over which he extended his paternal rule, than any of the monarchs who preceded him; so far, at least, as the encouragement and the diffusion of art may he said to be honourable and advantageous.

---

* Sir Joshua has observed, in his Fourteenth Discourse, that "a steady attention to the general effect takes up more time, and is much more laborious to the mind, than any mode of high finishing or smoothness, without such attention."

almost be mistaken for the living individuals represented. But here the range of the painter terminates: when the object placed before him ceases to guide him, he cannot advance a step further. His works could never have altered the character of the British school, nor pointed out to his successors in art the means by which nature may be rendered subservient to the intellectual powers of the artist, and embellished with graces beyond the reach of those who limit their views of her to mere imitation.

Ramsay is said to have been a self-taught painter, "because he had received no instructions," says Northcote, "till he gave them to himself in Italy; as every good painter has done before him, either there or elsewhere. But his being the compatriot of the Earl of Bute was a ready passport to royal notice on his return, particularly when added to his own abilities. He was certainly superior to the artists of his time in general; though his excellence did not warrrant Walpole in classing him so exactly with Sir Joshua, when he said — 'Reynolds and Ramsay have wanted subjects, not genius.' But I have heard Sir Joshua say," his pupil shrewdly remarks, "that Ramsay was the most sensible man of all living artists; and therefore it proved that something besides good sense is required to make a painter."

At several periods, while Sir Joshua resided in Leicester Square, he was successfully opposed by Romney, who occasionally engrossed a greater share of public patronage than Reynolds. There were two decided parties in the metropolis; and the Romney party was not only numerous, but loud in the praises of its favourite painter.* Garrick, in allusion to a

* The late Lord Chancellor Thurlow, when at an advanced age, sat to Mr. Phillips for his portrait, and, in the course of convers-

celebrated dramatist of his time, said, "He hates you, Sir Joshua, because you do not admire the painter whom he considers as a second Correggio." — "Who is that?" replied Reynolds. — "Why, his Correggio," answered Garrick, "is Romney!"

But neither the change in public opinion, nor the visible decrease in the number of his commissions, could disturb the equanimity of Sir Joshua: he continued to apply himself steadily and calmly to the daily labours of his profession; and when the fashionable world became weary of their idol, he beheld the return of his former popularity with as little emotion as he experienced at the loss of it.

Few men have, like Reynolds, possessed the power of calling back public attention to themselves, after it had been diverted into other channels: but Sir Joshua, in the course of his long and brilliant career, embracing a period of nearly forty years, has repeatedly done so with triumphant success; and his name stood as high at the time of his decease, as it did at the height of his practice. His reputation, in fact, was not grounded on caprice, or dependent on sources

---

ation, sometimes questioned him respecting the state of the art. "At one time," said his Lordship, "there were two factions contending for superiority; the Reynolds faction and the Romney faction: I was," he added, "of the Romney faction." And in giving his opinion of Sir Joshua, he told Mr. Phillips that he considered him to be "a great scoundrel and a bad painter,"— in allusion, perhaps, to the changes, which at one time were frequent, in the colouring of Reynolds's pictures.

"It is remarkable," observes Mr. Farington, "that Lord Thurlow could hold the opinion he did; as the portrait of his Lordship painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, is one of his finest productions: but the powers of Lord Thurlow appear to have been confined to his own profession, and did not extend to matters of taste. His judgment respecting poetry is said to have been no less deficient than it was on the subject of painting."

which he could not command as well at one period as another: and if we allow that his wealth, and his influence in society, may have greatly contributed to enable him to maintain his position, and to bear up against the attractions of novelty, which rarely display themselves in vain; still it must be recollected, that for these advantages he was originally indebted to the power of his genius, to the vigour and solidity of his understanding, and to his great and incessant exertions.

Romney was a painter of considerable talent; but he was not of Reynolds's calibre; and the world has already judged between them. He had the good sense, however, to avoid a close encounter with his adversary; and when asked, in later years, why he did not send his pictures to be exhibited at Somerset House (where Reynolds always sent his most impressive works), he answered, with a smile, "Because I know better."

Barry, at the commencement of his professional career, was indebted to Sir Joshua for much valuable advice; and he was not, at that time, too proud to be grateful for it. While a student at Rome, he received the following letter from Reynolds; the first part of which alludes to a contest in which Barry was engaged with the picture-dealers there, "who were acting very illiberally towards young English artists, and using underhand means to prevent their being employed by travellers, especially in copying pictures."

"DEAR SIR,—I am very much obliged to you for your remembrance of me in your letter to Mr. Burke, which, though I have read with great pleasure as a composition, I cannot help saying, with some regret to find that so great a portion of your attention has been engaged upon temporary matters, which might

have been so much more profitably employed upon what would stick by you through your whole life.

"Whoever is resolved to excel in painting, or indeed in any other art, must bring all his mind to bear upon that one object, from the moment he rises till he goes to bed. The effect of every object that meets the painter's eye may give him a lesson, provided his mind is calm, unembarrassed with other objects, and open to instruction. This general attention, with other studies connected with the art, which must employ the artist in his closet, will be found sufficient to fill up life, if it were much longer than it is. Were I in your place, I should consider myself playing a great game, and never suffer the little malice and envy of my rivals to draw off my attention from the main object; which if you pursue with a steady eye, it will not be in the power of all the Cicerones in the world to hurt you. Whilst they are endeavouring to prevent the gentlemen from employing the young artists, instead of injuring them, they are, in my opinion, doing them the greatest service. Whilst I was at Rome, I was very little employed by them, and that I always considered as so much time lost: copying those ornamental pictures which the travelling gentlemen always bring home with them as furniture for their houses, is far from being the most profitable manner of a student spending his time.

"Whoever has great views, I would recommend to him, whilst at Rome, rather to live on bread and water than lose those advantages which he can never hope to enjoy a second time, and which he will find only in the Vatican, where, I will engage, no cavalier sends his students to copy for him. I do not mean this as any reproach to the gentlemen: the works in that place, though they are the proper study of an artist, make

but an awkward figure painted in oil and reduced to the size of easel pictures. The Capella Sistina is the production of the greatest genius that was ever employed in the arts; it is worth considering by what principles that stupendous greatness of style is produced; and endeavouring to produce something of your own on those principles will be a more advantageous method of study than copying the St. Cecilia in the Borghese, or the Herodias of Guido, which may be copied to eternity without contributing one jot towards making a man a more able painter.

"If you neglect visiting the Vatican often, and particularly the Capella Sistina, you will neglect receiving that peculiar advantage which Rome can give above all other cities in the world. In other places you will find casts from the antique and capital pictures of the great masters, but it is *there* only that you can form an idea of the dignity of the art, as it is there only that you can see the works of Michel Angelo and Raffaelle. If you should not relish them at first, which may probably be the case, as they have none of those qualities which are captivating at first sight, never cease looking till you feel something like inspiration come over you, till you think every other painter insipid in comparison, and to be admired only for petty excellencies.

"I suppose you have heard of the establishment of a Royal Academy here; the first opportunity I have, I will send you the discourse I delivered at its opening, which was the 1st of January. As I hope you will be hereafter one of our body, I wish you would, as opportunity offers, make memorandums of the regulations of the academies that you may visit in your travels, to be engrafted on our own, if they should be found useful.

"I am, with the greatest esteem, yours,

"J. REYNOLDS.

"On reading my letter over, I think it requires some apology for the blunt appearance of a dictatorial style, in which I have obtruded my advice. I am forced to write in a great hurry, and have little time for polishing my style."

This letter was written in the year in which the Royal Academy was first opened; and Barry says, in a letter to Mr. Burke, of the early part of the same year, before he had heard of Reynolds's knighthood, and, probably, before he had received Sir Joshua's letter, "I am happy to find Mr. Reynolds is at the head of the Academy; from his known public spirit, and warm desire of raising up art amongst us, which exerted itself so successfully in establishing the exhibition, he will, I have no doubt, contrive this institution to be productive of all the advantages that could possibly be derived from it; and whilst it is in such hands as his we shall have nothing to fear from those shallows and quicksands upon which the Italian and French academies have lost themselves:" and on another occasion, in the same year, he wrote from Paris to Mr. Burke, whilst speaking of the paintings of Versailles, — "What I have since seen gives me more and more reason to admire Mr. Reynolds: you know my sentiments of him already, and the more I know and see of the art, the less likely they are to change."

On hearing that Reynolds had been knighted, he says, in another letter to Mr. Burke, "I have a notion, somehow or other, that the arts would be just now of some consequence, and pretty much of a public concern, did not the state competitors, of whom the papers are so full, divert the attention of the public into another channel. However, I can say with truth, that as nobody is more an enthusiast in art than I am, so there is no one who rejoices more sincerely at the

honour done art by the title and dignity his Majesty has graciously conferred on that person, whose plan of a public exhibition has been as serviceable to the art as his performances were. The public opinion will supply what I would say."

We have already observed, that the turbulent and irregular conduct of several members of the Associated Society of Artists gave rise to the establishment of the Royal Academy, which was opened on the 2d of January, 1769; and on this occasion the President, Mr. Reynolds, delivered a most appropriate and excellent discourse, for which the thanks of the General Assembly of Academicians were given to him; and shortly after he received the honour of knighthood.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was now in the forty-sixth year of his age: "his superior excellence in the art," Mr. Farington remarks, "was acknowledged by the unanimous votes which placed him in the chair of the Royal Academy — a situation in which he was enabled to display, in his admirable discourses, the extent of his knowledge of the principles of an art which he so highly adorned by his practice; and to inculcate, by precepts founded upon long observation and matured experience, lessons of wise instruction for the student, and calculated to excite in the public mind respect for an art in which he showed that (with the most favourable talents) excellence could not be attained without great mental and bodily application. But it was not by the productions of his professional skill and cultivated taste only, that Sir Joshua Reynolds attracted admiration — his exemplary moral conduct, his amiable and well-regulated temper, the polished suavity of his manners, a deportment always easy and unaffected, made his society agreeable to every one."

"His attention to the annual exhibitions was unre-

mitting, and his example admirable. His situation of President, and his high claim, from the superlative excellence of his pictures, never caused him to avail himself of those circumstances to obtain any particular regard to his own works. He was only anxious that the display should be advantageous, and that the exhibitors should be satisfied with the attention shown to their productions. His gallery was open, from whence pictures might be taken in such number as might be required; and if he expressed any wish concerning them, it was that a portion, at least, should be placed in situations accounted least favourable for viewing them; thereby to reconcile others to their necessary lot."

"He had great pleasure in viewing the exhibition of each year, and in his observations he was gentle and encouraging; for no man could be more free from jealousy. He always appeared to take great delight in remarking the extraordinary variety shown in the practice of British artists, which, he said, was not to be seen in any other country. The independence of the national character, he thought, was apparent even in our works of art, which, through all their gradations of merit, showed that they were the productions of men who thought for themselves; and who, regardless of the paths beaten by others, followed the bent of their own inclinations."

"From the time of his being made President of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua did all in his power to realise the earnest desire of his Majesty, that his institution should be no less respectable as a national establishment than useful in its purposes. It was with a view to improve the liberal character of the society that he suggested the idea of admitting in its body certain honorary members, eminent for their learning,

who, while they added grace to the institution, received from it an honour worthy of their distinguished talents. Accordingly, soon after the Royal Academy was established, his Majesty was graciously pleased to nominate Dr. Johnson Professor of Ancient Literature, Dr. Goldsmith Professor of Ancient History *, and Richard Dalton, Esq., his Majesty's Librarian, Antiquary to the society. Dr. Francklin, Greek Professor at Cambridge, was also appointed Chaplain to the Academy. To these, who were the first honorary members of the institution, many names of great celebrity have succeeded." †

"Another measure which originated in the same source should be mentioned. From the first establishment of the Royal Academy, it has been annually the custom of the members to dine together in the exhibition-room after the pictures had been arranged. This meeting was for several years held on St. George's day, and the day following the exhibition commenced. On these occasions it was usual to invite several persons distinguished for rank or talent; and as festive entertainments given under circumstances so novel could not fail to be spoken of with interest and satisfaction by the invited guests, a pressure of applications to this annual treat has been the consequence, which to the present moment has never relaxed."

"To Sir Joshua Reynolds these entertainments

* Goldsmith, in a letter to his brother, quaintly observes, on the subject of this appointment:—"The king has been pleased to make me Professor of Ancient History in a Royal Academy of Painting which he has just established; but there is no salary annexed, and I took it rather as a compliment to the institution than any benefit to myself. Honours to one in my situation are something like ruffles to a man that wants a shirt."

† In compliment to their President, the Academy afterwards appointed Mr. Boswell, for whom Sir Joshua had a great regard, their Secretary for foreign correspondence.

were highly agreeable; and, anxious that the company assembled at such times should be as select as possible, he earnestly recommended that the council should give up all private wishes in their invitation. To secure a permanent effect, therefore, to the President's advice, a law was made to limit their invitations to persons high in rank or official situation; to those distinguished for superior talent, and to patrons of the arts. By attending to this rule, the opening dinners of the exhibition of the Royal Academy became celebrated. The Prince of Wales has repeatedly honoured them with his presence; and generally some of the princes of the royal family appear at them. The ministers of state and other high political characters attend, and many of the heads of the church always form part of the company. At the dinner given in 1784 Dr. Johnson left his seat, by desire of the Prince of Wales, and went to the head of the table, to have the honour of being introduced to his royal highness. This was his last visit to the Academy. He died on the 13th of December in that year."

"These dinners at the Royal Academy," continues Mr. Farington, "have been sometimes peculiarly interesting. In 1786 the Prince of Wales had on his right hand the Duke of Orleans, accompanied by the Dukes de Lauzun and Fitzjames, and the Count de Grammont. The Duke of Orleans sat under the fine whole-length portrait of his royal highness, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and afforded the company present an opportunity to compare the admirable representation with the original. This ill-fated prince had much personal dignity. Sir Joshua, remarking how few persons appear with grace and ease when the arms are wholly unemployed, said, he never saw any man stand in such a position so well as the Duke of Orleans. He had

not then long to remain in this world. Influenced by his passions, his political career ended in his destruction.

"In mentioning these entertainments, it is gratifying to record a tribute of respect paid to a most worthy man, who passed a long life endeavouring to benefit his country,—the late Alderman Boydell.

"At an exhibition dinner at the Royal Academy, in 1789, which the Prince of Wales honoured with his presence, Mr. Burke, seeing Alderman Boydell at one of the tables, while toasts were circulating, wrote the following note to Sir Joshua Reynolds, who sat as president:—'This end of the table, in which, as there are many admirers of art, there are many friends of yours, wish to drink an English tradesman who patronises the art better than the grand monarque of France,—'Alderman Boydell, the commercial Mæcenas.' This note was shown to the Prince of Wales by Sir Joshua, and highly approved by his royal highness, and the toast was drank with unanimous approbation. The alderman was then in the sixty-sixth year of his age."

"This excellent citizen," continues Mr. Farington, "had, by prudent conduct and unceasing application, accumulated property which enabled him to form and to execute plans for the advancement of art and the encouragement of artists before unknown in this and scarcely in any country. At the time he commenced publishing prints, the art of engraving was in a very low state in England. Little was sought for but French prints; and large remittances went annually to purchase them. Mr. Boydell, moved less by hope of gain than by patriotic feeling, resolved, if possible, to turn the tide in favour of his native country. He knew this could only be done by improving the practice of our professors in that department. For this purpose he

used all the money he acquired in employing our most ingenious engravers to execute prints from pictures painted by eminent masters, by which means he called forth all their powers; and in a few years Mr. Boydell's success was complete. English prints became popular, not only in England, but throughout the Continent. The balance of trade in this article turned in our favour; and, while the works of Woollet, Sharp, and others were seen as the favourite ornaments of houses in Britain, they were sought for in France with almost equal avidity. Encouraged by his success, Mr. Boydell undertook to have engravings made from the whole of the celebrated collection of pictures at Houghton Hall in Norfolk, which was formed by Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford, while he was prime minister. When this was completed, he proposed to the public his grand plan to form a gallery of pictures, to be painted by British artists, from subjects taken from the plays of Shakspeare; an undertaking which afterwards afforded great employment for painters, who thus had an opportunity to show their powers in the higher departments of the art, and full occupation for every ingenious engraver. It was while this great work was carrying on, that Mr. Burke, a man reverenced by his country, availed himself of the opportunity which has been described to express his opinion of the merits of our worthy citizen."

"For Boydell's gallery of Shakspeare, Sir Joshua Reynolds painted two pictures,—the death of Cardinal Beaufort, from the play of Henry VI., for which five hundred guineas were paid, and the scene of Macbeth with the witches, for which picture he was paid one thousand guineas; a third, the picture of Puck, though not painted expressly for the gallery, was purchased by the alderman and applied to the work."

"Having thus introduced the name of Mr. Burke, it may here be said, that of all the distinguished men with whom Sir Joshua was acquainted, that great man stood highest in his estimation of their mental powers. He thought Dr. Johnson possessed a wonderful strength of mind, but that Mr. Burke had a more comprehensive capacity, a more exact judgment, and also that his knowledge was more extensive: with the most profound respect for the talents of both, he therefore decided that Mr. Burke was the superior character. Sir Joshua and Mr. Burke were for a great length of time warmly attached to each other. The death of the former preceded that of the latter only a few years, and the sorrow expressed by the survivor on that occasion showed the heartfelt affection he had for his departed friend."

"In his capacity of President, Sir Joshua, as before stated, read the first of his admirable discourses on the fine arts, on the opening of the Royal Academy, January 2d, 1769; and every second year, from that time, when the premiums of gold medals were given to the students of the Academy, he delivered a similar address. The last, which was the fifteenth, he read on the 10th of December, 1790, to a crowded assembly, in which many distinguished characters appeared among the auditors."*

* On the evening of the delivery of this discourse a remarkable circumstance occurred, which at the moment, says Northcote, not a little alarmed the company assembled to hear it. At the time when Sir Joshua was employed in delivering it, and just at the moment when a respectful and solemn silence prevailed, on a sudden a loud crash was heard, and a sensation felt as if the floor of the great room, which is at the top of the house, was giving way and falling. The company immediately took the alarm, and rushed towards the door or to the sides of the room, tumbling one over the other, in the utmost confusion and consternation, expecting every moment that the floor would fall away and precipitate

It was no part of Sir Joshua's prescribed duty as President to deliver an address on the presentation of the medals; but, "if prizes were to be given," he has himself remarked, in the last discourse which he delivered, "it appeared not only proper, but almost indispensably necessary, that something should be said by the President on the delivery of those prizes. And the President, for his own credit, would wish to say something more than mere words of compliment, which, by being frequently repeated, would soon become flat and uninteresting, and, by being addressed to many, would at last become a distinction to none." He thought, therefore, he adds, "if I were to precede the compliment with some instructive observations on the art, when we crowned merit in the artists whom we rewarded I might do something to animate and guide them in their future attempts."

How far Sir Joshua has succeeded in accomplishing his purpose the world has already decided, and students in art have reason to be grateful for the industry by which the author of the Discourses was enabled to excel in composing them, and to rejoice that the talents of their great projector were so admirably adapted to the

---

them down to the lower part of the building. Sir Joshua was silent, but did not move from his seat; when, after some little time, the company perceiving that the danger had ceased, resumed their places, and Sir Joshua calmly continued his discourse as coolly as if nothing extraordinary had occurred. Upon examination of the floor afterwards, it was found that one of the beams for its support had actually given way from the great weight of the assembly of persons who pressed upon it, and, probably, the Northcote, from a flaw also in the wood. I remember he added the remark Sir Joshua made on this accident was, that if the floor had really fallen, most of the persons assembled must have been crushed to death, and if so, the arts in this country would have been thrown two hundred years back. Providentially no such effect was produced from the circumstance.

task which he assigned himself. They cannot be too much commended, or too frequently in the hands of the painter.

While the plan was in agitation for the establishment of a Royal Academy, Sir Joshua went to Paris, in company with Mr. William Burke, who in a letter dated the 10th of October, from that metropolis, says: — "Mr. Reynolds and I make this scamper together, and are both extremely satisfied with our tour; we return in a few days."

Their return took place within the expected time, and the arrangements were then in so great a state of forwardness, that on the 28th of November a petition was presented to his Majesty, of which the proposed objects were, the establishment of a well-regulated school of design, for the use of students in art, and an annual exhibition of the works of the members of the Academy, to which it was proposed to admit those of any other artists whose performances might appear to deserve admission to it, at the discretion of the council deputed to make the selection. Annual and biennial prizes were also determined on, as stimulants to the exertions of the students. "These," observes Northcote, "were of course to be awarded to the best productions; but it was whimsically quoted at the time, from the laws of the ancient city of Thebes, that formerly the painter who exhibited the *worst* picture was also subject to a fine." Professorships were at the same time instituted in painting, sculpture, architecture, anatomy, and perspective; and the professors were bound to deliver periodical lectures on those parts of the art which they were severally appointed to teach.*

* A gold medal was presented once in every two years by the Royal Academy as a prize for the best historical picture, to be

The petition to the King was signed by Messrs. Cotes, Moser, West, and Chambers, afterwards Sir William Chambers, who had the honour of receiving his Majesty's ready assent to it; and, authorised by this encouragement, Mr. Chambers undertook the task of digesting the plan or form of the projected institution, together with the laws necessary for its government, all of which were arranged under the immediate inspection of his Majesty, and when completed received his signature.

In forming the laws of the Royal Academy, Mr. Chambers was careful to avoid the defects which had characterised those of the Incorporated Society of Artists, and to prevent, so far as it was practicable, the possibility of their being misapplied or misinterpreted. In fact, a better or a more efficient code of laws could scarcely have been framed for the regulation of any body of individuals; and they have proved to be, on many occasions, fully equal to restrain

---

painted by a student of the academy. The annual prizes were for drawings.

A young painter, who had made several different designs for the composition of the subject he was about to execute, with a view of becoming a candidate for the gold medal, brought his sketches to Sir Joshua, to have his opinion as to which was the best in point of sentiment, and the most descriptive of the story represented.

Sir Joshua's answer was to this effect: — "You may choose whichever you please; it will turn out precisely the same; you are to recollect that your picture is to be judged of by painters only. It will be the manual execution of the work, and that alone, which will engross the attention of artists, and the degree of merit displayed in that part of the art is what will determine them in their election of the candidate for the prize.

"It is no matter how long or how short the time may have been in which you have done your work, or with how much ease or how much difficulty it may have been accomplished; the result alone is to be considered."

irregularity and to direct misapprehension or uncertainty.*

We have already observed, that Mr. Reynolds had long withdrawn himself from any participation in the management of the Incorporated Society of Artists, of which he was nominated a director; but, as he had no access to the King, and was wholly absorbed in the study of his profession, he was not at first aware how far his Majesty intended to extend his protection to another institution, and appears to have decided on refusing to belong to any which was not strengthened by royal patronage and encouragement. At the same time the projectors of the new academy proceeded so cautiously and so secretly with their measures, that the President of the Incorporated Society had no idea of what had been already effected; and though it was rumoured that a Royal Academy was likely to be shortly established, he had ventured to state to the mem-

* At its first establishment the Academy was held, *pro tempore*, in two large apartments, which had been built for auction rooms, opposite to Market Lane, Pall Mall; and here the first lecture was delivered, on the 16th of October, 1769, by Dr. William Hunter, who was the first professor of anatomy. In this situation it remained till the year 1771, when his Majesty was graciously pleased to grant the use of the royal apartments at Old Somerset Palace to the Academy, where the establishment was fixed to nearly its full extent; but the annual exhibitions were still necessarily held at the old rooms in Pall Mall.

When it was determined to remove some of the offices of government to the spot where the old palace of Somerset House stood, his Majesty was pleased to order that the Royal and Antiquarian Societies should be united under one roof with the Royal Academy; and when those premises were fit for their reception, they were settled in their present situation, and the Royal Academy opened its first exhibition at that place, on the 1st of May, 1780, at which time the keeper and secretary were both provided with suitable apartments, and the library was soon after opened, with considerable improvements. The lectures also commenced at Somerset House on the 23d of October of the same year.

bers, from the chair, that there were no grounds for the report, and that "the King intended to patronise them, and to visit their exhibitions." This positive assertion misled Mr. Reynolds; he knew that the president, who had been the King's instructor in perspective, enjoyed the royal favour, and thought that more reliance might be placed on his statement than on the rumour to which it alluded.

In the mean time, the four chief agents in the establishment of the new academy had made out a list of their officers, and other members included in the projected institution, containing about thirty names, among which that of Reynolds had been inserted. This list was to be delivered to the King for his Majesty's approbation and signature. Mr. Reynolds, however, still doubtful of his Majesty's intentions, was unwilling to join with either party, and expressed himself to that effect to Mr. Chambers; in consequence of which Mr. Penny was sent to persuade him to join the new society, but failed to accomplish this object. Mr. West was then applied to, as the person who was thought to have the greatest influence with Reynolds, and he accordingly called in Leicester Square on the same evening on which the whole party had a meeting at the house of Mr. Wilton, expecting the result of West's negotiation, the King having appointed the following morning to receive the plan of the new academy, together with the nomination of its officers.

Mr. West remained upwards of two hours endeavouring to persuade Reynolds, who at length ordered his carriage, and went with Mr. West to meet the assembled party, but without any decided intention of becoming a member of the society. Immediately on his entering the room the whole party rose, and hailed him as president: he seemed to be much affected at

the compliment, and returned his warmest thanks for the honour intended him, and for the feeling by which the communication was dictated; but still declined having any decided participation in the scheme, which had been so repeatedly proposed to him, till he had consulted his friends, Edmund Burke and Dr. Johnson. "This demur," observes Northcote, "greatly disappointed the company," as Messrs. West and Cotes were expected to be with the King the next morning, by appointment and could not present any list of their officers to his Majesty without including the president in the number. The members deputed to wait upon his Majesty contrived by some means, however, to avoid their engagement, but it was not till a fortnight afterwards that Reynolds gave his consent; and when Mr. West called upon him in the interval to ascertain his decided intentions on the subject, Reynolds frankly informed him that he knew from the best authority that "their scheme would come to nothing;" and mentioned as a reason for saying so the assertion of Mr. Kirby, the president of the rival society, which had been originally dictated from the chair, and which he had since, on another occasion, repeated to Reynolds in private. Mr. Kirby, in fact, who appears to have been a very worthy man, was himself wholly under a delusion; and when the truth became apparent, he is thought by some to have been so much affected by the disappointment which came upon him very suddenly, that he actually died from extreme mortification.

The development of the mystery, for such it appears to have been, put an end to Mr Reynolds's objections; and he complied with the unanimous wish of the Academy, in which the public decidedly participated.

It cannot for a moment be supposed that the presidentship of the Royal Academy was not an object of Reynolds's ambition, but we think that the grounds of his

objection to accept it, till his Majesty had openly declared his intentions, are fully sufficient to account for the delay which took place between the time of his nomination and accession to the office, and to justify his previous refusal to join in the measures of the new society, without presuming that he was actuated by any other motives than those of the strictest propriety.

He has himself very clearly explained the reasons by which he was influenced, in his opening address to the members of the Academy, at the time when all the circumstances of the case must have been fresh in the recollection of those who were present. The passage we allude to is as follows:—

"The numberless and ineffectual consultations which I have had with many in this assembly to form plans and concert schemes for an academy, afford sufficient proof of the impossibility of succeeding *without the influence of majesty*."

It has, however, been stated, and Northcote had heard it asserted, that Reynolds objected to belong to the society on any other conditions than that of being made president. Such a report, we have no doubt, had been in circulation; for Northcote was a man of veracity; but it does not seem probable that it had any foundation in fact; and it is certainly unnecessary to search for other grounds of objection than those to which Reynolds has himself adverted.

The establishment of the Royal Academy was a most important measure for the arts and the artists of the country.

The means of study to which artists had been previously confined were, as we have already observed, very limited; and former academies, before the exhibitions, had been wholly supported by the private subscriptions of the individuals who profited by their

advantages. They were very ill supplied with casts from the antique; and before the liberality and public spirit of the Duke of Richmond induced him to open his gallery to the public, there were none to which artists had any means of access. Hence the taste of the student was necessarily confined; and with respect to other means of instruction, he was left to grope out the principles of his art by any light that accident might afford him.

The respectability conferred on the artists of the country by the immediate protection and patronage of the sovereign, was at the same time a powerful stimulus to rising merit; and the promising student might reasonably hope to become himself, eventually, a member of that establishment to which he had been indebted for the knowledge of his art, and to have the gratification of extending to others the advantages which he had derived from the Academy. He might aspire to the honourable distinction of president, and look forward to the possession of an ample field for the display of his intellectual powers in the professorship of the several departments. Thus the arts have been gradually advancing since the establishment of the Royal Academy; and the brilliant attainments of many of its members have contributed to the improvement of succeeding ones. They will still continue to do so while anything remains to be imparted; and the English school of art, if public encouragement fail not, may be expected to rival the most distinguished of any former period.

The limitation in the number of the members of the Academy, though it has often been viewed as a defect, is, we think, a material advantage. Honours should not be too cheaply bought; for that which is of easy attainment will never be coveted by genius; and the

prize which is shared among many will "at last become a distinction to none." If the time should ever come when more than sixty individuals of distinguished talent and ability shall be found among the artists of England, it will then be soon enough to consider the propriety of extending the number of royal academicians.*

We have already observed that the idea which was once entertained of Johnson or Burke having assisted in the composition of Sir Joshua's Discourses, has long ago ceased to have weight; but it appears to be certain, that in the delivery of them he laboured under several disadvantages. His manner was occasionally embarrassed; there was but little variation in the tone of his voice; and he sometimes spoke so low as to be scarcely intelligible to those who were seated in a distant part of the room. These defects may be accounted for, says Northcote, "from two causes: first, that his deafness might have prevented his being well able to modulate his voice; but, secondly, I am rather of opinion that the real cause was, that, as no man ever felt a greater horror at affectation than he did, so he feared to assume the orator, lest it should have that appearance; he, therefore, naturally fell into the opposite extreme, as the safest retreat from what he thought the greatest evil.

"It has been related as an anecdote," continues Northcote, "that on one of the evenings when he delivered his discourse, and when the audience was, as usual, numerous, and composed principally of the learned and the great, the Earl of C——, who was present, came up to him, saying, 'Sir Joshua, you read

* Sixty is the number of the members of the Academy, as prescribed, from its commencement, by the laws of the establishment; viz. forty academicians, and twenty associates, who are elected academicians as vacancies occur. Both numbers must be always complete.

your discourse in so low a tone, that I could not distinguish one word you said.' To which the President replied, with a smile, ' That was to my advantage.' "

The pictures which attracted most attention in the first exhibition of the Royal Academy in Pall Mall, were " The Departure of Regulus from Rome, and Venus lamenting the Death of Adonis, by West; Hector and Andromache, and Venus directing Æneas and Achates, by Angelica Kauffman, who was at that time but lately arrived in London; the King and Queen, by Nathaniel Dance; Lady Molyneux, by Gainsborough; A Piping Boy, a candlelight piece, by Hone; an altar-piece of the Annunciation, by Cipriani; Hebe, the Duke of Gloucester, and A Boy playing at Cricket, by Cotes; a capital landscape, representing a view of Penton Lynn, by Barrett; and the smith, described by Shakspeare, with open mouth, listening to a tailor's news, by Penny. To these we must add Sir Joshua's portraits of the Duchess of Manchester and son, as Diana disarming Cupid, the portrait of Lady Blake, as Juno receiving the cestus of Venus, and the portrait of Miss Morris, as Hope nursing Love."

We may form some idea of the unremitting application which his ardent thirst after excellence, and his consciousness of the difficulty of attaining it, induced Reynolds to bestow upon his profession, from the number of pictures which he exhibited at different periods of his life. The whole number which he sent to different exhibitions was two hundred and fifty-two: viz. to the society's room in the Strand four; to the Incorporated Society twenty, and to the Royal Academy two hundred and twenty-eight. Yet these only formed a select portion of the numerous pictures which he executed.

From his arrival in England from Italy, says Faring-

ton, in the year 1753, till his death, in 1792, a period of thirty-nine years, excepting the visits which he paid to the Continent, with a view to his improvement in his art, and twice visiting his native country, he never was absent from his painting-room for more than a few days at a time; but he occasionally, though seldom, made short visits to his friends who resided within a moderate distance of the metropolis.* Yet this excess of application did not prevent him from maintaining an extensive intercourse with society; and he may be said to have numbered among his friends and acquaintance almost all the celebrated characters of his day. His house and table, Northcote tells us, were always open to his friends, with invitation or without, and as freely made use of. To Goldsmith, he adds, in particular, Sir Joshua was always attentive; a man of whom it has been not unaptly said, that his carelessness of conduct and frivolity of manners obscured the goodness of his heart. Mr. Cumberland, in his Memoirs, has a passage peculiarly illustrative of this, where he says, that "Sir Joshua Reynolds was very good to him, and would have drilled him into better trim and order for society if he would have been amenable; for Reynolds was a perfect gentleman, had good sense, great propriety, with all the social attributes and graces of hospitality, equal to any man. He well knew how to appreciate men of talents, and how near akin the muse of poetry was to that of art, of which he was so eminent a master. From Goldsmith he caught the subject of his famous Ugolino; what aids he got from others, if he got any, were worthily bestowed and happily applied."

* Sir Joshua built himself a house on Richmond Hill; but it is remarkable that, though he frequently visited it, he never, it is said, passed a night there.

" Mr. Cumberland, however," says Northcote, " is, perhaps, rather inaccurate in his assertion respecting the painting of Ugolino, which was finished in the year 1773, and begun not long before as an historical subject."

" The fact is that this painting may be said to have been produced, as an historical picture, by accident; for the head of the count had been painted previous to the year 1773, and finished on what we painters call a ' half-length canvass,' and was in point of expression exactly as it now stands, but without any intention on the part of Sir Joshua of making it the subject of an historical composition, or having the story of Count Ugolino in his thoughts. Being exposed in the picture gallery along with his other works, it was seen either by Mr. Edmund Burke or Dr. Goldsmith, I am not certain which, who immediately exclaimed, that it struck him as being the precise person, countenance, and expression of the Count Ugolino, as described by Dante in his Inferno.

" Sir Joshua immediately had his canvass enlarged, in order that he might be enabled to add the other figures, and to complete his painting of the impressive description of the Italian poet. This picture, when finished, was bought by the late Duke of Dorset for 400 guineas, and it has since been noticed by Dr. Joseph Warton, who, in his Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope, introduces the story in exemplification of some pathetic passages in that writer; and then adds, ' Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose mind is stored with great and exalted ideas, has lately shown by a picture on this subject how qualified he is to preside at a Royal Academy, and that he has talents that ought not to be confined to portrait painting.' "

Of this work, as a picture, there can scarcely be two opinions; the world has long decided on its merits

but we think that if Sir Joshua had himself imagined the character of Dante's Ugolino, instead of allowing the study from nature, which he had previously made, to represent it, he would have given it a more elevated and poetical expression.*

When Goldsmith published his Deserted Village, he inscribed it to Sir Joshua in a few short lines which do honour to the feeling by which his works are invariably characterised; and which, unlike that of Sterne, came direct from the heart and not from the pen of the writer alone. They are well known, but the concluding ones can scarcely be too often repeated. "The only dedication I ever made," says the poet of nature, "was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you."

In the course of the year 1772, Reynolds painted a remarkably fine picture of "Resignation," and dedicated the print taken from it to Goldsmith, with some lines under it quoted from his poem above alluded to. "This seems to have been done by Sir Joshua," observes Northcote, as a return of the compliment to Goldsmith, who had dedicated the Deserted Village to him. When Goldsmith was prematurely taken from a world which he was better formed to delight

* Sir Joshua's picture of The Children in the Wood was equally the production of accident; "at least," says Northcote, "as an historical composition: for when the beggar infant, who was sitting to him for some other picture, fell asleep during the sitting, Reynolds was so pleased with the innocence of the object, that he would not disturb its repose to go on with the picture on which he was engaged, but took up a fresh canvass, and quickly painted the child's head, as it lay, before it moved; and as the infant altered its position, still in sleep, he sketched another view of its head on the same canvass. He afterwards finished a background of a woody scenery, and, by adding the robin-redbreast, converted it into the subject of the Children in the Wood."

than to live in, Sir Joshua was so much affected at his death, that "he did not touch a pencil for that day; a circumstance most extraordinary," says his pupil and biographer, "for him who passed no day *without a line.*" He acted as executor, and managed, in the best manner, the confused state of the Doctor's affairs. He also went himself to Westminster Abbey, and fixed upon the place for Goldsmith's monument which it now occupies in Poets' Corner. Nollekens was employed to make the monument, and Dr. Johnson composed the epitaph.

The only original portrait of Goldsmith is the fine one by Sir Joshua, in the possession of the Duke of Dorset, at Knowle. "It is sufficiently unlovely," says Mr. Cunningham; "yet it was said by the artist's sister to be the most flattered likeness of all her brother's works."

Soon after Goldsmith's death, which occurred on the 4th of April, 1774, some persons dining with Sir Joshua were commenting rather freely on a part of his works, which, in their opinion, manifested neither taste nor originality. To this Dr. Johnson listened, in his usual growling manner, for some time; when at length his patience being exhausted, he rose with great dignity, looked them full in the face, and exclaimed, "If nobody were suffered to abuse poor Goldy but those who could write as well, he would have few censors."

Goldsmith's carelessness of manner and apparent inaptitude for conversation has been often remarked, and severely criticised. Horace Walpole has called him "an inspired idiot," and Garrick describes him as one

> "—— for shortness called Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel, and talk'd like poor poll."

But much of what has been alluded to appears to have been assumed. Sir Joshua mentioned to Boswell, that he had heard Goldsmith talk with great warmth of the pleasure of being liked, and observe, how hard it would be if literary celebrity should deprive a man of that satisfaction, which, he said, he perceived it often did, from the awe or the envy which attended it; and Reynolds was convinced, from this circumstance, says Northcote, "that he was intentionally more absurd, in order to lessen himself in social intercourse, trusting that his character would be sufficiently supported by his works. If it was his intention," he adds, "to appear absurd in company, he was often very successful. This," in Northcote's opinion, "was really the case;" and he also thought that Sir Joshua was so sensible of this "advantage," as he terms it, that he "followed the same idea," though "in a much less degree, as he never had a wish to impress his company with any awe of the great abilities with which he was endowed, especially when in the society of those of high rank." "I have heard Sir Joshua say," continues his pupil, "that he has frequently seen the whole company struck with an awful silence at the entrance of Goldsmith; but that the doctor has quickly dispelled the charm by his boyish and social manners, and he then has soon become the plaything and favourite of the company."*

* With respect to the feeling which Northcote alludes to, in Sir Joshua, it has been observed by Reynolds, in his private memoranda, that—"When a painter becomes fond of talking, he had better put a padlock on his mouth; because those who can be admired for what they say will have less desire to be admired for what they can do; and as the former is so much easier performed with applause than the latter, it will more frequently be adopted: it being the nature of mankind to get as much commendation as they can acquire, and by the easiest means."

About the year 1770, Sir Joshua's portrait was painted by Zoffanii, in a large picture, which contained at the same time the portraits of all the first members of the Royal Academy; it is at present in the king's collection, and has been engraved by Earlom. Soon afterwards Reynolds gave Dr. Johnson a copy of the portrait now at Knowle, in which the Doctor is painted with his hands held up, and in his own short hair. Johnson notices the portrait in the following letter: —

"DEAR SIR, — When I came to Lichfield, I found that my portrait had been much visited and much admired. Every man has a lurking wish to appear considerable in his native place; and I was pleased with the dignity conferred by such a testimony of your regard."

Dr. Johnson, like Goldsmith, knew nothing of painting, either in theory or practice; "notwithstanding the many eulogiums on the art, which, after the commencement of his friendship with Reynolds, he inserted, on various occasions, in his writings." He once said, himself, to Sir John Hawkins, that in his whole life he was never capable of discerning the least resemblance of any kind between a picture and the object it was meant to represent. Portraiture appeared to him the only desirable part of the art, and this he seems merely to have valued for the sake of the persons represented. He alludes to it in the following terms: —

"Genius is chiefly exerted in historical pictures, and the art of the painter of portraits is often lost in the obscurity of his subject. But it is in painting as in life; what is greatest is not always best. I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and to goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction,

that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in renewing tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead."

Again; "Every man is always present to himself, and has therefore little need of his own resemblance; nor can desire it but for the sake of those he loves, and by whom he hopes to be remembered. This use of the art is a natural and reasonable consequence of affection; and though, like other human actions, it is often complicated with pride, yet even such pride is more laudable than that by which palaces are covered with pictures, that, however excellent, neither imply the owner's virtue, nor excite it."

"This is certainly," says Northcote, "the best apology for portrait painting that has ever been given;" but if other parts of the art had never been more highly appreciated than by Johnson, we might as easily dispense with the works of Michel Angelo, Raffaelle, and Titian, as with those of Pompeo Battoni; and if they had never been more deserving of commendation, the world would have to apologise for the centuries of bad taste during which it has held them in such high estimation.

Johnson, though wholly ignorant of painting, seems, however, to have been much interested in the success of the Royal Academy, whose exhibitions continued rapidly to improve. In a note written in May, 1783, he says; "The exhibition prospers so much that Sir Joshua says it will maintain an Academy: he estimates the probable amount at 3000*l.*"

In fact, the receipts of the Academy soon enabled its members to dispense with the annual contributions, which, to the amount of 5000*l.*, his Majesty so liberally supplied from the privy purse, at the first

establishment of the Institution; and they have since been wholly dependent on their own resources.

In the year 1775, Sir Joshua painted that portrait of Johnson in which he is represented as reading, and near-sighted. The expression of this peculiarity so much displeased the Doctor, that he remarked, "It is not friendly to hand down to posterity the imperfections of any man." "But Reynolds, on the contrary," says Northcote, "esteemed it as a circumstance in nature to be remarked as characterising the person represented, and therefore as giving additional value to the portrait."

In allusion to this picture, Mrs. Thrale says, "I observed that he would not be known by posterity for his defects only, let Sir Joshua do his worst:" and when she adverted to Reynolds's own portrait, in which he introduced the ear-trumpet, and which he had painted for Mrs. Thrale, the Doctor is said to have answered, "He may paint himself as deaf as he chooses; but I will not be *blinking Sam.*"*

With another of his portraits Johnson seems to have been better pleased; he writes again to Mrs. Thrale; "I have twice sat to Sir Joshua, and he seems to like his own performance. He has projected another, in which I am to be busy; but we can think of it at leisure." In a subsequent letter, he adds, "Sir Joshua has finished my picture, and it seems to please every body, but I shall wait to see how it pleases you."

* In the latter part of the same year Sir Joshua painted the portrait of himself, in the dress of his university honours, which was placed in the gallery of illustrious painters at Florence, where it still remains. It was sent in consequence of his having been elected a member of the Imperial Academy in that city; and in compliance with the regulations of the establishment, by which the newly elected member is required to present his portrait, painted by his own hand; a circumstance which has produced the most curious and valuable collection of portraits of eminent painters in the world.

The scrupulous veracity of Johnson was a striking feature in his character; and Reynolds observed, in conversing with a friend upon the strictness with which the Doctor inculcated to all his acquaintance the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degree of falsehood, that "all who were of Johnson's *school* were distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy which they might not have possessed, in the same degree, if they had not been acquainted with him."

Johnson once sat for his portrait to Miss Reynolds, who painted in miniature; but, much as he admired the fair artist, he did not venture to compliment her upon the work; and when it was finished, observed to her that it was "Johnson's grimly ghost." The picture was afterwards engraved, and the Doctor recommended, as a motto, the appropriate stanza from the old ballad "William and Margaret."

A lady of his acquaintance once asked him how it happened that he was never invited to dine at the tables of the great; to which he replied, "Because, madam, great lords and ladies do not like to have their mouths stopped."

When Miss Reynolds sent him a work which she had had privately printed, but which never appears to have been published, entitled, an Essay on Taste, he returned her the following letter: —

"DEAREST MADAM,—There is in these few pages or remarks such depth of penetration, such nicety of observation, as Locke or Pascal might be proud of. This, I desire you to believe, is my real opinion. However, it cannot be published in its present state. Many of your notions seem not to be very clear, even in your own mind; many are not sufficiently developed and expanded for the common reader: it wants every where

to be smoother and plainer. You may by revisal and correction make it a very elegant and curious work.

"I am, my dearest dear,

"Your affectionate and obedient servant,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

Sir Joshua was often applied to by Johnson for contributions for charitable purposes; and on one of these occasions he writes: —

"It was not before yesterday that I received your splendid benefaction. To a hand so liberal in distributing I hope no one will envy the power of acquiring."

To Johnson himself he had been a valuable friend; and a few days before this great man died, one of the three requests which he made to Reynolds was to forgive him thirty pounds which he had borrowed of him. The other two were highly characteristic of the Doctor's own exemplary principles:—"To read the Scriptures carefully; and to abstain from using his pencil on the Sabbath day." To these requests Sir Joshua gave a willing assent, and is said to have faithfully observed them.

There were, however, very few to whom Johnson would be indebted for any thing, and nothing proves the high opinion which he entertained of Sir Joshua more than his consenting to be under pecuniary obligations to him. Reynolds has observed, that if any man ventured to draw him into an obligation without his own consent, the Doctor was sure to take the earliest opportunity of affronting him, by way of clearing off the account.

Johnson's death, which occurred on the 13th of December, 1784, was severely felt by Sir Joshua; the two friends had been acquainted for more than thirty

years, and had lived on terms of the greatest cordiality, which had never been disturbed by differences, or broken by any interruptions: they fully appreciated each other's characters, and mutually rejoiced in the friendship which united them; their regard was strengthened by respect, and their intercourse cemented by unlimited confidence.

Reynolds, however, gained more from his friend than Johnson had the tact to imbibe from him: he acquired from the Doctor the habit of thinking correctly, and of expressing himself with clearness and decision; of analysing the results of observation, and submitting what was specious or uncertain to the tests of simplicity and truth. His perception was at all times acute, and his discriminative powers were naturally strong; but Johnson's was a master-mind, and no one could come within the range of its influence, who had any inclination to learn, or any capacity for improvement, without inhaling a portion of the knowledge which floated in the atmosphere around it.

In many respects, the Doctor might have greatly improved himself by Sir Joshua's precepts and example; but he seemed to consider himself as independent of the world, and, conscious of his gigantic attainments, he seldom looked beyond his own resources for instruction.

"He had lived neglected," observes Mr. Cunningham, "nay, spurned, by the opulent and the titled — till his universal fame forced him upon them; and when, after life was half spent in toil and sorrow, he came forth at length from his obscurity, he spread consternation among the polished circles by his uncouth shape and gestures, more by his ready and vigorous wit, and an incomparable sharpness of sarcasm, made doubly keen and piercing by learning.

His circumstances rendered it unnecessary to soothe the proud by assentation, or the beautiful by fine speeches. He appeared among men, not to win his way leisurely to the first place by smiles and bows; but to claim it, take it, and keep it, as the distinction to which he was born, and of which he had been too long defrauded."

Johnson appointed Sir Joshua Reynolds one of his executors, along with Sir William Scott and Sir John Hawkins: "a trust," says Northcote, "which he faithfully fulfilled: he also left him his great French Dictionary by Moreri, and his own copy of his folio English Dictionary, of the last revision, as a friendly testimony of remembrance; also, a book from his library to Mrs. Frances Reynolds, sister to Sir Joshua."

Our limits will not allow us to mention in chronological order all the numerous incidents of Sir Joshua's life, as detailed by his several biographers. Till the period at which he attained the meridian of his professional reputation, we have thought it essential to do so; for the progress of genius from obscurity to fame, cannot fail to be interesting and instructive: we must, in future, confine ourselves to the insertion of matter which we should scarcely be justified in omitting, and to that more especially, which has reference to art, as connected with Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Among the numerous memoranda on the subject of his art, which Sir Joshua had noted, at different periods, with a view to their subsequent arrangement, we find the following candid account of his deficiences, and of the means which he employed to advance himself in his profession.

"Not having the advantage of an early academical education, I never had that facility of drawing the naked figure which an artist ought to have. It ap-

peared to me too late, when I went to Italy, and began to feel my own deficiencies, to endeavour to acquire that readiness of invention which I observed others to possess. I consoled myself, however, by remarking that these ready inventors are extremely apt to acquiesce in imperfections; and that, if I had not their facility, I should, for this very reason, be more likely to avoid the defect which too often accompanies it, — a trite and common-place mode of invention.

"How difficult it is for the artist who possesses this facility to guard against carelessness and common-place invention is well known; and in a kindred art Metastasio is an eminent instance; who always complained of the great difficulty he found in attaining correctness, in consequence of his having been, in his youth, an *improvisatore*. Having this defect constantly in my mind, I never was contented with common-place attitudes or inventions of any kind. I considered myself as playing a great game; and, instead of beginning to save money, I laid it out faster than I got it, in purchasing the best examples of art that could be procured; for I even borrowed money for this purpose. The possession of pictures by Titian, Vandyck, Rembrandt, &c. I considered as the best kind of wealth.* By carefully studying the works of great

* On one occasion he offered to cover twice with guineas, as the price of the purchase, the picture of "The Witch coming from Hell with a Lapful of Charms," by Teniers; but this was refused. "Yet it is pleasing to record," says Northcote, "that he afterwards possessed this very picture; and, as he modestly declared, by *only* painting a portrait, a fancy subject, and giving another of his own works already executed. The sum which he offered would have amounted to near one thousand guineas."

So anxious was Sir Joshua for the diffusion of a good taste in the art, and that future students might find a practical commentary on those precepts which he had then "ceased to deliver, that he

masters, this advantage is obtained; we find that certain niceties of expression are capable of being executed, which otherwise we might suppose beyond the reach of art. This gives us a confidence in ourselves; and we are thus invited to endeavour at not only the same happiness of execution, but also at other congenial excellences. Study, indeed, consists in learning to see nature, and may be called the art of using other men's minds. By this kind of contemplation and exercise, we are taught to think in their way, and sometimes to attain their excellence. Thus, for instance, if I had never seen any of the works of Correggio, I should never, perhaps, have remarked in nature the expression which I find in one of his pieces; or, if I had remarked it, I might have thought it too difficult, or, perhaps, impossible to be executed.*

"My success, and continual improvement in my art, if I may be allowed that expression, may be ascribed in a good measure to a principle which I will boldly recommend to imitation; I mean a principle of honesty; which in this, as in all other instances, is, according to the vulgar proverb, certainly the best policy. — I always endeavoured to do my best. Great or vulgar, good subjects or bad, all had nature; by the exact representation of which, or even by the endea-

---

in the most liberal manner, offered to the Academy his collection of pictures," which sold after his death for upwards of ten thousand pounds, "at a very low price, on the condition that they would purchase the Lyceum, in the Strand, for the purpose of constructing an exhibition room. This generous offer, however, for several reasons, was declined."

* We may add, that if he had never seen the works of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle, he would never have attained the intellectual superiority in art by which his works are so highly distinguished; and it is probable that he would never have wholly emancipated himself from the monotonous insipidity and littleness of manner which characterised the best works of Kneller and Hudson.

vour to give such a representation, the painter cannot but improve in his art.

" My principal labour was employed on the whole together; and I was never weary of changing, and trying different modes and different effects. I had always some scheme in my mind, and a perpetual desire to advance. By constantly endeavouring to do my best, I acquired a power of doing that with spontaneous facility, which was, at first, the whole effort of my mind: and my reward was threefold; the satisfaction resulting from acting on this just principle, improvement in my art, and the pleasure derived from a constant pursuit after excellence.

" I was always willing to believe that my uncertainty of proceeding in my works — that is, my never being sure of my hand, and my frequent alterations — arose from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in any thing short of a high degree of excellence. I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring: no man, indeed, could teach me. If I have never been settled with respect to colouring, let it at the same time be remembered that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every kind of excellence that I saw in the works of others; without considering that there is in colouring, as in style, excellences which are incompatible with each other: however, this pursuit, or, indeed, any similar pursuit, prevents the artist from being tired of his art. We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring, changed their manner; while others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out. On the contrary, I tried every effect of colour; and leaving out every colour in its turn, showed every colour that I could do without it. As I alternately left out every colour, I tried every new

colour; and often, it is well known, failed. The former practice, I am aware, may be compared, by those whose chief object is ridicule, to that of the poet mentioned in the 'Spectator,' who, in a poem of twenty-four books, contrived in each book to leave out a letter. But I was influenced by no such idle or foolish affectation. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence. This is the only merit I assume to myself from my conduct in that respect."

"The evident desire which Sir Joshua had," observes Northcote, "to render his pictures perfect to the utmost of his ability, and in each succeeding instance to surpass the former, occasioned his frequently making them inferior to what they had been in the course of the process; and when it was observed to him, 'that probably he had never sent out to the world any one of his paintings in as perfect a state as it had been, he answered, 'that he believed the remark was very just; but that, notwithstanding, he certainly gained ground by it on the whole, and improved himself by the experiment;' adding, 'if you are not bold enough to run the risk of losing, you can never hope to gain.'

"With the same wish of advancing himself in the art, I have heard him say," continues his pupil, "that whenever a new sitter came to him for a portrait, he always began it with a full determination to make it the best picture he had ever painted; neither would he allow it to be an excuse for his failure, to say, 'the subject was a bad one for a picture;' there was always nature, he would observe, which, if well treated, was fully sufficient for the purpose." *

* Sir Joshua's usual dead-colouring, we have already observed, was what is commonly termed black and white; a little red only

"In the 'Life of Barry,' p. 257., will be found an anonymous letter to him, containing criticisms on

---

being used, and no yellow, in the first process. Sometimes it was lake, black, and white; sometimes red lead, black, and white, with vermilion occasionally; sometimes asphaltum and white, with vermilion and black; sometimes umber and white, or Vandyke brown and white, with blue and red; and sometimes lake, and yellow and white, without red. There were few heads which he did not glaze, either with lake and transparent yellow; with vermilion, used thinly, as a stain; with asphaltum, or lake and asphaltum; with yellow ochre, orpiment, or Naples yellow, used transparently; or with black and red, or blue and red, as his picture might require. In most of his preparations, blue, or blue-black were used, and not black alone.

The object of all these different modes of beginning was brilliancy and transparency of colour, which he soon discovered could not be acquired by using many colours at a time: such as were deficient in the first preparation, were therefore added in the subsequent ones; but always, it must be recollected, in such a manner as to allow the preparation beneath to appear more or less through what was passed over it, particularly in the half tones.

It signifies little whether a head be begun with red or with yellow, for both colours are found, in some proportions, in flesh; but they cannot be used together, unless by a very skilful hand, without destroying, in some degree, the purity of both: the red preparation passed over with yellow, or the yellow one passed over with red, would produce, under proper management, the same effect. Transparency is all that is necessary, in a greater or less degree, as required; and, provided the one colour appear through the other, it is of little importance which is used first.

Glazing, of course, must always be regulated by the state of the picture to which it is applied; and the transparent colour which may be proper for one, could not, perhaps, be used with propriety in another.

Sir Joshua's vehicles were mostly varnish, and wax and varnish; sometime copaiva and wax, and occasionally wax alone, dissolved in turpentine, and thinned with the same as required. Over these he sometimes finished in oil, or copaiva, either alone or mixed with wax; and sometimes with varnish, or wax and varnish, as he began. He would sometimes begin with oil and finish with Venice turpentine and wax, or wax and varnish; painting hard-drying substances over soft ones, and soft over hard, indiscriminately; nor did he ever dream of the consequences of doing so till the cracking of his pictures made them manifest.

All these materials he used with the skill of a master, always

painting, as well as on poetry, and on his works in the Adelphi. Barry appears not to have suspected who

making them subservient to the more important objects of his art; but he studiously concealed them from his pupils; fearing, what would probably have been the case, that they would attach more importance to them than they deserved, and overlook the great end of art, in paying too much attention to the means by which they might fancy it could be effected.

"I remember," says Northcote, "he was very much displeased with a young painter who once showed him a picture in which experimental mixtures composed of wax and varnishes of different sorts had been used; and afterwards, speaking of him to me, he said, 'That boy will never do any good, if they do not take away from him all his gallipots of varnish and foolish mixtures:' nor would he suffer me," his pupil adds, "during the whole time I resided in his house, to make use of any other materials than the common preparations of colour, just as we have them from the hands of the colourman; and all varnishes, and every kind of experiment, were strictly prohibited. All his own preparations of colour were carefully kept concealed from my sight, and locked up securely in his drawers, never to be seen by any one but himself. In his own practice, however, which long experience, and careful finishing in early life, had confirmed, he would venture on whatever experiment was recommended to him; and when he was at any time accused of having spoiled many of his portraits by trying experiments upon them, he would answer, that it was always his wish to have made these experiments on his fancy pictures, and, in that case, had they failed of success, the injury would have fallen on himself, as he should have kept them on his hands; but that he was prevented from practising thus from being perpetually employed in painting portraits, and therefore obliged to make his trials on those, as eagerness in the pursuit of excellence was with him uncontrollable.

"It was his opinion," Northcote adds, "that if the vegetable colours, which are infinitely the most beautiful, were inclosed by varnish so as to be kept from the external air, they would not fade: but what he proposed as the remedy," observes his pupil, "was, in fact, worse than the disease; as the colour would still fade, and the varnish itself would crack.

"It was of advantage," he continues, "to the old school of Italian painters, that they were under the necessity of making most of their colours themselves, or, at least, of having them made under the inspection of such as possessed chemical knowledge; which excluded all possibility of those adulterations to which the moderns are exposed. The same also was the case in England

was the author of it, but the writer of his life says,—It seems to be, from every mark of internal evidence, the production of Burke.

"My own opinion is," observes Northcote, "that it is a combination of the talents of Burke and Sir Joshua Reynolds; for there are opinions contained in it that none but a painter could give, and which are likewise the very opinions of Sir Joshua;" and "it

---

till the time of Sir Godfrey Kneller, who, when he came to this country, brought over a servant with him whose sole employment was to prepare all his colours and materials for painting. He afterwards set him up as a colourman for artists; and this man's success, he being the first who kept a colour-shop in London, occasioned the practice of it as trade.

"Sir Joshua was so careful about procuring unadulterated colours, and articles of every kind for his professional purposes, that he has often desired me to inform the colourman," adds Northcote, "that he should not regard any price that might be required, provided the colours were genuine."

It should be recollected, in commenting upon Sir Joshua's experiments, that, at the period when he flourished, the art of colouring could only be learnt by practical research. "There is not a man on earth," he used to say, "who has the least notion of colouring; we all of us have it equally to seek for and find out, as at present it is totally lost to the art."

We must also allow the truth of a remark which a friend of Sir Joshua's once made to a connoisseur, who exclaimed against his *flying colours;* that "every picture of Reynolds's was an experiment of art made by an ingenious man; and that *the art advanced by such experiments even where they failed.* Any painter," he added, "who merely wished to make his colours stand, had only to purchase them at the first colour-shop he might come to.

When Northcote, as he says, "humbly endeavoured to persuade Sir Joshua to abandon those fleeting colours, lake and carmine, in painting his flesh, and to adopt vermilion in their stead;" Reynolds looked on his hand, and observed, "I can see no vermilion in flesh."—"But did not Sir Godfrey Kneller," said his pupil, "always use vermilion in his flesh-colour?"—"What signifies," sharply retorted Sir Joshua, "what a man used, who could not colour?—but you may use it if you will." We may add, that he adopted it himself in all his latter works, finding by experience the ill effects of lake and carmine. Had the madder lake then been invented, the change would not have been necessary.

seems natural that Burke," supposing him to have written it, "should ask the assistance of Sir Joshua in the affair; and must have been" convinced that he "could afford him much serviceable advice" on the subject.

As we think it extremely probable that such was the case, we shall insert those parts of it which may be presumed to have been dictated by Sir Joshua; particularly as they contain many excellent precepts for the guidance of young artists.

"The painter who wishes to make his pictures what fine pictures must be—nature elevated and improved—must first of all gain a perfect knowledge of nature as it is: before he endeavours, like Lysippus, to make men as they ought to be, he must know how to render them as they are; he must acquire an accurate knowledge of all the parts of the body and countenance: to know anatomy will be of little use, unless physiology and physiognomy are joined with it, so that the artist may know what peculiar combinations and proportions of features constitute different characters, and what effect the passions and affections of the mind have upon these features. This is a science which all the theorists in the world cannot teach, and which can only be acquired by observation, practice, and attention. It is not by copying antique statues, or by giving a loose to the imagination in what are called poetical compositions, that artists will be enabled to produce works of real merit; but by laborious and accurate investigation of nature upon the principles observed by the Greeks,—first to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the common forms of nature, and then, by selecting and combining, to form compositions according to their own elevated conceptions. This is the principle of true poetry as well as of painting and

sculpture. Homer and Shakspeare had probably never seen characters so strongly marked as those of Achilles and Lady Macbeth; at least, we may safely say, that few of their readers have; and yet we all feel that these characters are drawn from nature, and that if we have not seen exactly the same, we have seen models or miniatures of them. The limbs and features are those of common nature, but elevated and improved by the taste and skill of the artist.

"This taste may be the gift of nature, the result of perfect organisation, and the skill may be acquired by habit and study; but the ground-work, the knowledge of limbs and features, must be acquired by practical attention and accurate observation. And here, Sir, that portrait-painting, which you affect so much to despise, is the best school that an artist can study in, provided he studies it, as every man of genius will do, with a philosophic eye; not with a view merely to copy the face before him, but to learn the character of it, with a view to employ in more important works what is good of it, and to reject what is not. It was in this view that the great painters of the Roman and Bolognese schools collected such numbers of studies of heads from nature, which they afterwards embellished and introduced in their pictures as occasion required. Hence that boundless variety which is observed in their works.

"I do not mean to recommend to the historical painter to make his works an assemblage of caricatures, like those of Hogarth and some of our present artists; but as there is scarcely any character so insipid that a Shakspeare or a Fielding would not have been able to discover something particular in, so there is scarcely any countenance so vacant, but that there are some trifling features which may be of use to a skilful and

ingenious artist; though it seldom or never happens that any character of countenance is sufficiently strong and perfect to serve of itself for the hero of a poem or picture, until it has been touched and embellished by the fostering hand of the poet or the painter.

"Portrait-painting may be to the painter, what the practical knowledge of the world is to the poet, provided he considers it as a school by which he is to acquire the *means* of perfection in his art, and not as the *object* of that perfection. It was practical knowledge of the world which gave the poetry of Homer and Shakspeare that superiority which still exists over all other works of the same kind; and it was a philosophic attention to the imitation of common nature, which portrait-painting ought to be, that gave the Roman and Bolognese schools their superiority over the Florentine, which excelled so much in the theory of the art.*

"We are told that many artists bestowed their whole lives upon a single composition. We are not to suppose that these great artists employed so many years in chipping one block of marble; but that the greatest part of the time was employed in studying nature, particularly the vast and intricate branches of physiology and pathology, in order to enable them to

* These remarks may be illustrated by the following extract from Sir Joshua's catalogue to Ralph's Exhibition, which we shall hereafter advert to.

No. 12. Lud. Caracci; a study of a head from the life, for a picture of St. Antonio, in the church of —— at Bologna.

"*In* the finished picture, all the more minute parts which are here expressed, are omitted; the light part is one broad mass; the scanty and lock of hair which falls on the forehead is there much fuller and larger. A copy of this picture seen at the same time with this study would be a good lesson to students, by showing the different manner of painting a portrait and an historical head; and teach them, at the same time, the advantage of always having recourse to nature."

execute perfectly the great works which they had conceived.

"I have seen a large cartoon copied from a little picture of the Vision of Ezekiel by Raffaelle, in which the copyist thought, without doubt, to expand and illustrate the idea of the author; but by losing the majesty of the countenances which makes the original so sublime, notwithstanding its being in miniature, his colossal copy became ridiculous, instead of awful."

The passages which we have quoted above, are attributed by Northcote to Sir Joshua, we think, with great appearance of probability; and such conclusion will be fully sufficient to justify their insertion in this place. We should willingly have added those of Burke, which are written in excellent taste; but their length will not allow us to do so: one of them, however, we must indulge ourselves by quoting; and for the remaining passages we refer our readers to the "Life of Barry." The passage we allude to is as follows:—

"It is not enough to know the forms, positions, and proportions of the constituent parts of the animal machine, but we should know the nice changes that are produced in them by the various affections of the mind, as grief, agony, rage, &c.; without this we may produce splendid compositions and graceful figures, but we shall never approach that perfection to which the ancients arrived, — a perfection to which, I fear, the very constitution of modern society is an insurmountable obstacle. Such a minister as Pericles might, perhaps, overcome it; but considering the present system of education, it is scarcely possible that such a one should appear. To distinguish between what is good and what is bad, falls to the lot of many; but to distinguish between what is barely good and what is truly excellent, falls to the lot of very few; and it very rarely happens that any of these few are

kings and ministers, who are able and willing to reward an artist for giving up his whole time to one object; which he must do if he means to make it truly excellent."*

* It may be further suggested, that the strong expression of passion or sentiment, however true it may be to particular classes of nature, is by no means sufficient for the historical painter, unless it be also illustrative of the manner in which the personages represented in his work would display the effects of their emotion. The just discrimination, required in the artist, between what is really consistent with truth, and that which is often termed *natural*, is, perhaps, the most important desideratum in his art. The discriminative feeling to which we allude, is the same with regard to character and expression of countenance, as that which influenced the sculptors of Greece in their admirable selection of form. The form which they created, in endless variety, was not only true to nature, in the general acceptation of the term, but it was also true to those particular examples of nature which the artist proposed to represent.

The Apollo, the Hercules, the Theseus, the Antinöus, are all equally illustrative of nature; but each of them has a character peculiar to itself, and which cannot be said to distinguish any other class than that to which the figure belongs; indeed, it could not be applied to another without a violation of propriety. It is thus with regard to expression. Grief or rage may, perhaps, be so strongly expressed in the countenance of a particular figure, that the majority of spectators who look on it will immediately call to mind the expression of similar passions which they may have witnessed in nature, and be struck with the accuracy of the resemblance which the work of the artist may bear to it. The parallel is, perhaps, truly drawn, and the expression of the figure which engrosses their attention may be admirably descriptive of nature, without being natural to the character which the artist intended to pourtray.

The grief or the rage of an elevated mind will not be expressed by the same peculiarities which may distinguish the expression of those emotions in the countenance of an ordinary or low-minded individual: both may feel equally excited, but each will express his emotion in the manner peculiar to himself. There is nature in both the expressions, but nature of a different class; and if the one should be applied to the other, the artist would fail in his personification.

As the discriminative power which must regulate the artist in his choice, is more the result of feeling than of reason, it follows that the painter, who has not himself an elevated mind, will not be

Sir Joshua was at all times ready to give the benefit of his advice to those who showed a disposition to profit by it; but he very rarely offered it unsolicited; conscious that, in such cases — to use his own expression — it usually "went in at one ear and out at the other." In the year 1780, he wrote an admirable letter to Mr. Pocock, the eminent marine painter, on the subject of his profession, which contains so much valuable advice to artists in that peculiar department, that we shall need no apology for inserting it.

Mr. Pocock sent his first attempt in oil colours to Sir Joshua, requesting him at the same time to give his candid opinion on the work, and expressing a wish that, if he approved of it, it might be exhibited at the Royal Academy. Sir Joshua replied as follows:—

"DEAR SIR, — Your picture came too late for exhibition. It is much beyond what I expected from a first essay in oil colours: all the parts separately are extremely well painted; but there wants a harmony in the whole together: there is no union between the clouds, the sea, and the sails. Though the sea appears sometimes as green as you have painted it, yet it is a choice very unfavourable to the art: it seems to me absolutely necessary, in order to produce

able to conceive, and will consequently fail in representing, the expression of elevated feeling in others; and, on this account, the artist who proposes to devote himself to the more intellectual branches of the art, should come prepared to the study of them with a cultivated mind, and with feeling as elevated as that which he may have to represent in the personification of heroes, of monarchs, and of deities. The man of classical taste may descend to the expression of ordinary feeling; but he who has a commonplace mind will never rise to dignity and refinement in art, however strongly and truly he may chance to delineate the passions and emotions of nature as presented to his own contracted view of them.

harmony, and that the picture should appear to be painted, as the phrase is, from one palette, that those three great objects of ship-painting should be much of the same colour, as was the practice of Vandervelt; and he seems to have been driven to this conduct by necessity. Whatever colour predominates in a picture, that colour must be introduced in other parts; but no green colour, such as you have given to the sea, can make a part of a sky. I believe the truth is, that, however the sea may appear green when you are looking down upon it, and it is very near, — at such a distance as your ships are supposed to be, it assumes the colour of the sky.

"I would recommend to you, above all things, to paint from nature, instead of drawing; to carry your palette and pencils to the water-side. This was the practice of Vernet, whom I knew at Rome: he there showed me his studies in colours, which struck me very much, for that truth which those works only have which are produced while the impression is warm from nature: at that time he was a perfect master of the character of water, if I may use the expression; he is now reduced to a mere mannerist, and no longer to be recommended for imitation, except you would imitate him by uniting landscape to ship painting, which certainly makes a more pleasing composition than either alone."

In the latter part of the summer of the year 1773, Sir Joshua paid a visit to his native county, in consequence of having been chosen mayor of the borough of Plympton; and so strongly was he attached to the place of his birth, that he declared that this circumstance gave him more pleasure than any other honour which he had received during his life. On this occasion he presented his portrait, painted by himself, to

the corporation, who placed it in the town-hall. "It is a good picture," says Northcote, "with a light sky background, and in his academical dress as Doctor of Laws."

The vicar of a neighbouring parish, Mr. Alcock, enclosed to Sir Joshua the following couplet, on the receipt of his valuable present to the corporation:—

"Laudat Romanus Raphaelem, Græcus Apellem,
Plympton Reynolden jactat, utrique parem."

"But the new mayor," continues his biographer, "though, perhaps, pleased with the compliment, modestly declared that he thought it would be assuming too much honour to himself, to have it affixed to, or even put upon the back of, the picture, as intended.

It was in the same year, in the first week of July, that Sir Joshua was admitted to the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law of the University of Oxford. Lord North was at the same time installed Chancellor of the University. Fifteen persons were admitted to degrees on that occasion; but Sir Joshua and Dr. Beattie were the only two who were distinguished by an encomium from Dr. Vansittart, the Professor of Civil Law, whose duty it is to present the graduates to the Chancellor; and the only two who received any extraordinary marks of applause.

Sir Joshua painted a fine allegorial portrait of Dr. Beattie, in the dress of his Oxonian degree, with his book on the Immutability of Truth beneath his arm. The Angel of Truth goes before him, beating down Sophistry, Scepticism, and Infidelity. Resemblances have been discovered, in these personifications, to Voltaire, Gibbon, and Hume; but that of Voltaire appears to have been the only one intended by Sir Joshua; and at this his friend Goldsmith was very

indignant, exclaiming, when he saw it, "It ill becomes a man of your eminence and character, Sir Joshua, to condescend to flattery like this, or to think of degrading so high a genius as Voltaire before so mean a writer as Beattie; Dr. Beattie and his book will be as much forgotten in ten years as if it had never been in existence; but your picture and the fame of Voltaire will live for ever, to your disgrace as a flatterer."

Few will venture to deny that Goldsmith was right in his estimate of the talents of these writers; but Sir Joshua Reynolds valued the intention of the author, more than the ability displayed in Beattie's book. "He respected him," says Northcote, "more for his virtues than his talents; frequently entertaining him both at his house in town, and at his villa on Richmond Hill; testifying by every means in his power the esteem he felt for him as a friend, and the opinion he held respecting his writings." That is, we must presume, that they were well intended: and that the humble efforts of the advocate of Truth were more honourable than the splended achievements of Infidelity.

It is probable, also, that the honours and the applause of the University were more freely bestowed upon the man than the writer.*

The chapel of old Somerset House had been given by his Majesty to the Royal Academy; and it was suggested by one of the members, on the occasion of a

* It may be observed, that Dr. Beattie either mistook the personification of the allegory, as intended by Sir Joshua, or else gave it purposely another meaning; for he says, in one of his letters, that the figures represented Prejudice, Scepticism, and Folly, who are shrinking away from the light that beams on the breast of the Angel.

Sir Joshua made a present of the work to the Doctor, who appears to have been very justly proud of it; he kept it covered with a green silk curtain, and left it to his niece, Miss Glennie.

of a general meeting, "that the place would afford a good opportunity of convincing the public of the advantages that would arise from ornamenting churches and cathedrals with works of art." It was therefore proposed that the members should decorate the chapel with some of their own performances; and the example, it was thought, might thus afford an opening for the introduction of the art into buildings of a similar nature.

All the members of the Academy were struck with the idea, and volunteered their services without hesitation: but Sir Joshua took the scheme up on a bolder plan, and immediately proposed, as an amendment, that, instead of contributing to ornament the chapel, "they should fly at once at higher game, and undertake St. Paul's Cathedral." The grandeur of this suggestion excited universal applause, and the amendment was carried unanimously: the President was empowered to make the proper application to the Dean and Chapter; and Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol, at that time Dean of St. Paul's, became a strong advocate for the scheme.

A meeting of the Academy was then held on the subject, and six artists were chosen for the attempt; Sir Joshua Reynolds, West, Barry, Dance, Cipriani, and Angelica Kauffman. The Society for the Encouragement of Arts came forward and took up the measure, adding at the same time four artists to the number originally fixed upon.

Sir Joshua engaged to present "The Nativity," and West offered his picture of "Moses with the Laws." But the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, Dr. Terrick, refused their consent to the plan; and when Dr Newton paid a visit to the latter, expecting to receive his consent, and reported with

some degree of exultation the progress he had made in the affair, the old Bishop, assuming a very grave countenance, replied in the following terms: — "My good Lord Bishop of Bristol, I have already been distantly and imperfectly informed of such an affair having been in contemplation; but as the sole power, at last, remains with myself, I therefore inform your Lordship, that whilst I live, and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the metropolitan church to be opened for the introduction of popery into it!"

At that time, all works of sculpture were also excluded from St. Paul's; for the Dean, Dr. Newton, who died soon afterwards, desired in his will that a monument should be erected to his memory, which was to cost 500*l.*, and placed in the cathedral, if possible: this he did with the liberal idea of introducing the art into St. Paul's, as originally projected by Sir Christopher Wren. The request was, however, denied to the family; and the monument, executed by Banks, was placed in St. Bride's Church, of which Dr. Newton was the rector.

In this year (1773), Sir Joshua painted that portrait of himself which is now in the Royal Academy: it represents him attired as a Doctor of Laws, in the cap and gown of his honorary degree.

Three years afterwards Northcote took leave of his instructor: the parting was highly creditable to the feelings of both, and Reynolds concluded by observing, "Remember that something more is to be done now than formerly; Kneller, Lely, and Hudson will not do now." I was rather surprised, observes his pupil, to hear Sir Joshua join the two former names with that of Hudson, who was so evidently their inferior, as to be out of all comparison. But Reynolds, when he made the remark, had a more extended view of the art in

his thoughts than Lely or Kneller ever dreamt of; he did not mean to compare them with Hudson, but to suggest to his pupil that a nobler idea of the resources of the painter must be formed, and that the British school of art had already begun to appreciate the value of higher authorities.

This feeling was strong in Sir Joshua. One day at dinner, when Northcote was present, Miss Reynolds said, "Brother, how happens it that we never meet with any pictures by Jarvis the painter?" Sir Joshua replied very briskly, — "Because they are all up in the garret!"

Northcote once heard Sir Joshua assert, that, at the time when he began his career as a painter, the admiration of the works of Kneller was so predominant, that if any one had ventured to name those of Vandyke in competition with them, the painters, then living, would have laughed him to scorn, as having advanced the greatest absurdity.

Of mere likeness, in portraiture, Reynolds thought very little; and used to say that he could instruct any boy, that chance might throw in his way, to paint a likeness in a portrait in half a year's time; but to give an impressive and a just expression and character to a picture, or to paint it like Velasquez, was another thing. "What we are all," he said, "attempting to do with great labour, he does at once."

His views of art were somewhat different from those of the Dean of Gloucester, who said once, at a meeting of the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, that he thought a pinmaker was a more useful and valuable member of society than Raphael.

Sir Joshua has left a fragment in allusion to this circumstance, written in his own hand, and probably at the time when the remark was made, wherein he states that "this is an observation of a very narrow

mind; a mind that is confined to the mere object of commerce; that sees with a microscopic eye but a part of the great machine of the economy of life, and thinks that small part which he sees to be the whole. Commerce is the means, not the end, of happiness or pleasure: the end is a rational enjoyment of life, by means of arts and sciences; it is, therefore, the highest degree of folly to set the means in a higher rank of esteem than the accomplished end. It is as much as to say that the brickmaker is a more useful member of society than the architect who employs him. The usefulness of the brickmaker is acknowledged, but the rank of him and of the architect are very different. No man deserves better of mankind, than he who has the art of opening sources of intellectual pleasure and instruction by means of the senses."

Without professing to agree with Sir Joshua in his opinion of what constitutes the end of human life, we may certainly allow that intellectual enjoyments deserve a much higher place in the estimate of happiness than those which we only have in common with the selfish, the gross, or the illiterate. Whatever tends to enlarge the contracted mind, or to contribute to the rational enjoyment of those who can appreciate the value of intellect, is of sterling importance to society: the arts and the sciences have manifestly such a tendency, and are, therefore, peculiarly deserving of encouragement; but they cannot, with propriety, be considered as the ends of creation, if happiness be supposed to be its object, more than those pursuits with which Sir Joshua has contrasted them. Were it so, the man of taste and the philosopher would have better security for happiness themselves, and would contribute much more to the happiness of others, than we find to be consistent with fact; and would mono-

polise a greater share of human enjoyment than appears to have been intended for their portion.

In the early part of the year 1774, the Society of Arts are said to have passed the resolution, that a series of historical and allegorical pictures should be painted by the most approved artists of the kingdom, to decorate their new room in the Adelphi. It was proposed that there should be eight historical and two allegorical subjects; the former to be illustrative of British history.

The profits arising from the exhibition of these works were to be appropriated, for a limited time, to the remuneration of the artists employed, of whom the selection was as follows:—The historical painters were to have been Sir Joshua Reynolds, Angelica Kauffman, West, Cipriani, Barry, Wright, Mortimer, and Dance: the allegorical designs to be executed by Penny and Romney.

Sir Joshua, however, after some deliberation, thought proper to decline the proposal; and the rooms have since been decorated, as is well known, by Barry solely.

Barry had then completed his studies at Rome, and had been for some time in England; but notwithstanding the friendship which had been always expressed, and always manifested, towards him by Reynolds, he had latterly made but an ungrateful return for it, and allowed himself to be influenced by feelings of resentment and caprice for which Sir Joshua never gave him any cause; but which, perhaps, as Northcote has observed, may have partly arisen from the petty jealousy which he felt at Sir Joshua's having painted a portrait of Burke for his friend Mr. Thrale.

While in Italy, Barry expressed himself grateful for the sensible and well-timed advice of Sir Joshua; and

it is reasonable to conclude that he profited much by it, for there are few who have pursued their art with more enthusiasm or more industry than he did; but at the period alluded to, the natural impetuosity of his temper, which rendered him peculiarly impatient of advice, and, indeed, of remarks of any kind connected with himself, was restrained by the difference of rank in the art which existed between him and Reynolds. There is no sense of rivalship between student and preceptor; and the jealousy with which Barry in after life regarded Sir Joshua, and all those who were qualified to enter the lists with him, had not then begun to display itself. The hostile feeling was probably in a great measure strengthened by the comparison between his own scanty means of existence and the affluent circumstances of Reynolds: he felt that the department of art which he professed was entitled to more encouragement than it received in his hands; and might also have imagined that Sir Joshua's success was greater than a portrait-painter merited, and have thought himself defrauded of his right to public favour by one who should have ranked as his inferior.

Whatever were the causes of Barry's hostility, they continued till the death of its object dissolved it; and then the kindly feelings of the man—for he had them—took place of the jealousy and the pride of the artist.

In his sixth Lecture, read at the Academy, in his department as Professor of Painting, Barry freely bestowed some well-deserved encomiums on Sir Joshua, about twelve months after his decease; and the Marchioness of Thomond, who inherited by her uncle's will the greater part of Reynolds's property, presented him, in token of acknowledgment, the chair in which Sir Joshua placed his sitters.

"Alas! this chair," said Barry in reply, "that had

such a glorious career of fortune, instrumental as it has been in giving the most advantageous stability to the otherwise fleeting, perishable graces of a Lady Sarah Bunbury or a Waldegrave, or in perpetuating the negligent honest exterior of the authors of the Rambler, the Traveller, and almost every one to whom the public admiration gave a currency for abilities, beauty, rank, or fashion!

"The very chair that is immortalised in Mrs. Siddons's Tragic Muse, where it will have as much celebrity as the chair of Pindar, which for so many ages was shown in the porch at Olympia!—this chair of Sir Joshua Reynolds may rest well satisfied with the reputation it has gained; and although its present possessor may not be enabled to grace it with any new ornament, yet it can surely count upon finding a most affectionate reverential conservator, whilst God shall permit it to remain under his care."

In the year 1799, Sir Joshua contributed to the decoration of the new apartments of the Academy at Somerset House, by executing a picture for the handsome ceiling of the library. The subject of the work is a beautiful personification of the Theory of Painting; in her hand is a scroll with the following inscription:—"Theory is the knowledge of what is truly nature,"—a definition, says Northcote, quite in unison with the general principle so ably maintained by the painter throughout his discourses. To the Council-room Sir Joshua also contributed the portraits of his Majesty George III., and that of his royal consort. His own portrait also occupies a prominent place there, representing him as attired in his favourite costume—the cap and gown peculiar to his honorary degree.

The same year terminated the mortal career of Garrick; whose fame will descend to posterity, with that

of Kemble and Siddons, through many succeeding generations; and when the talents of the actor shall cease to be appreciated, his name will still remain to claim the glory which attached to them.

Garrick continued to act till a late period of his life; and when the circumstance was mentioned to Sir Joshua as extraordinary, since his fame had been long established and his fortune was made, the experience which Reynolds had acquired of human nature suggested, "that it was necessary for Garrick to do so, in order to preserve his popularity, and to keep up his importance with the great, who soon neglect and forget those who cease to be the town talk, however eminent they may have been."

In this year, Sir Joshua, who had previously raised his price to thirty-five guineas for a head, now extended it to fifty, at which it continued during the remainder of his life. "His rapidly accumulating fortune," says Northcote, "was not, however, for his sole enjoyment; he still felt the luxury of doing good, and had many objects of bounty pointed out to him by his friend Johnson; who, in one of his letters in this year to Mrs. Piozzi, inquires, 'Will master give me any thing for my poor neighbours? I have *had* from Sir Joshua and Mr. Strahan.'"

It has been asserted that Sir Joshua Reynolds was habitually parsimonious and avaricious; but when Gainsborough asked him sixty guineas for his celebrated picture of "The Girl and Pigs," Sir Joshua liberally paid him down a hundred, observing that the merit of the work entitled him to more than he asked for it. "Malice has charged him with avarice," says a contemporary artist, Mr. Dayes, "probably from his not having been prodigal, like too many of his profession. His offer to me proves the contrary.—At the time that I

made the drawings of the King, at St. Paul's, after his illness, Reynolds complimented me handsomely on seeing them, and afterwards observed, that the labour bestowed must have been such that I could not be remunerated by selling them; but if I would publish them myself, he would lend me the money necessary, and engage to get a handsome subscription among the nobility."

In addition to these instances of what candour will term liberality, we may subjoin a little anecdote recorded by Northcote:—

"An artist," he says, "of considerable merit, with a large and increasing family, was reduced at one time so very low in his circumstances, that he could not venture out without danger of being arrested. Sir Joshua, having accidentally heard of his situation, immediately hurried to his residence, to inquire into the truth of the report: when he arrived there, the unfortunate artist told him all the melancholy particulars of his lot; adding, that 40*l.* would enable him to compound with his creditors. After some little further conversation, Sir Joshua took his leave, assuring the distressed man that he would do something for him; and when he was bidding him adieu, he took him kindly by the hand, and pressing it with warmth, hurried off with that kind of triumph in his heart which the exalted of human kind only experience; whilst the astonished artist found that he had left in his grasp a bank-note of 100*l.* Of such traits of benevolence," his biographer adds, "many other instances might certainly be recorded."

It has been suggested in a recent publication, that Sir Joshua "could afford to be liberal;" but experience will convince us that they who have the means of indulging a benevolent feeling, have not always the

inclination to do so; and, indeed, it may be often observed in our own time, as it has been at more remote periods, that "the desire of amassing increases in proportion to the increase of wealth." If those who had the best means of judging correctly have united in assuring us that Reynolds was benevolent, it appears to be unnecessary to look for other motives, by which he might possibly have been influenced, than those by which benevolence is usually excited; and it seems to be unreasonable to assign as its cause, that which will fail to account for it.

It was in the year 1780 that the members of the Royal Academy first began to exhibit in Somerset House; for it was not till then that the apartments were completed, which had been for some years in progress for their accommodation. On this occasion the critics of the day were diffuse in their remarks on the importance of the new establishment. One of them has expressed himself in the following terms: —

"The excellence to which the arts have arisen, in England, call particularly on the attention of the world. The progress of the Academy has been so rapid, that though this is only the twelfth year of its existence, it has already made Great Britain the seat of the arts; and in painting, sculpture, and engraving, it rivals, if it does not excel, all other schools in Europe. In all ages the progress of the arts to excellence has been slow and gradual; but it is the singular merit of the Royal Academy of Britain, that it has broke through the fetters with which similar institutions have heretofore been confined, and by one rapid stride has obtained the pre-eminence of all competitors."

Sir Joshua's offerings to this exhibition were — his portrait of Miss Beauclerc, in the character of Spencer's Una, and his emblematical figure of Justice,

painted as a model for the window which Mr. Jarvis was then executing at Oxford. To these were added his portraits of Gibbon, of Lady Beaumont, Lord Cholmondeley, and the Duke of Gloucester. The receipts of this year, says Northcote, exceeded the sum of 3000*l.*

From 1769 to 1780, the Exhibitions produced, at an average, about 1500*l.* The receipts in 1780 amounted to more than 3000*l.*; and those of 1796 exceeded that sum, being the year of the greatest receipt, says Malone, from the first institution of the Academy. They have since, we believe, averaged more than 3000*l.*, and are said to have occasionally exceeded four thousand.

The rapid progress of art, and the improvement of the national taste, may be supposed to have greatly contributed to increase the receipts of the Academy, and the variety observable in the annual exhibitions could scarcely fail to be a source of attraction. At present there is scarcely a department in the art which is not occupied by painters of talent; and some of them have carried the branches which they profess to a greater degree of perfection than has ever been attained by others. If the Arts were more considered by the Government of the country as objects of national importance, and more frequently introduced in public discussions as subjects of national interest, they would probably receive the only stimulus which is wanting in their present state of general improvement.

The patronage conferred by individuals on Art is as extensive in its range as it is honourable to those who diffuse it, and beneficial to the artists who experience it. But there is no substitute for national encouragement: if the state will not show that it partakes in the interest excited; if it will not take the lead in the patronage of Art, and establish its importance as a

national benefit, as an object entitled to national protection and encouragement, there will still remain an obstacle to its farther advancement, which nothing can effectually remove.

The patronage of the Sovereign has been liberally extended to the Arts and the Artists of the country ever since the establishment of the Royal Academy; and they have certainly derived proportionate advantage and importance from the operation of so powerful an impulse. But the Royal protection has not been combined with that of the Government of the country, and the King may be said to have extended to the Arts the liberal patronage of the highest individual in the nation, in which the nation itself has not participated. If Great Britain should be destined to see the Houses of Parliament united with the Sovereign in the patronage of art, it will prove to the world that the result of such encouragement is worthy of the means employed to promote it; and the Arts will be placed upon the only foundation which can raise them above the vicissitudes of caprice, and secure to them a permanent establishment.

"Surely, in concerns of this kind, there can be no room for the considerations of petty economy—for the demurrings of estimate and calculation: there is an expense which enriches and adorns a state, and an economy which impoverishes and degrades it. The one is the enlightened policy of the merchant, connected with the commerce of the world, who calculates on the broad scale of profit and loss, comprehends remote advantages, combines complicated operations, and pours out his funds with apparent profusion through a thousand outlets of hazardous adventure,—secure in the general result of his principles, and calmly tracing the progress of his interests through all their circuitous

channels of return: the other is the short-sighted solicitude of the pedler, whose ideas are confined to his counter—who, incapable of generalised views or extended operations, sees not beyond the first links of vulgar advantage, but casting up in his terrified imagination the paltry items of daily disbursement, suffers the apprehensions of expense to overcome the hopes of profit, till he has neither understanding to speculate nor spirit to adventure."

"It is the policy of a great nation to be liberal and magnificent; to be free of her rewards, splendid in her establishments, and gorgeous in her public works. These are not the expenses that sap and mine the foundations of public prosperity, that break in upon the capital, or lay waste the income of a state; they may be said to arise in her most enlightened views of general advantage; to be amongst her best and most profitable speculations; they produce large returns of respect and consideration from our neighbours and competitors—of patriotic exultation amongst ourselves; they make men proud of their country, and, from priding in it, prompt in its defence; they play upon all the chords of generous feeling, elevate us above the animal and the machine, and make us triumph in the powers and attributes of man."

"What expense can be more gracious, more becoming, more popular? can tend more directly "to bless him that giveth and him who receiveth," than that which is directed to adorn and dignify our country—which does honour to her valour and her virtue—which calls forth the energies of her genius, and directs them to the celebration of her fame?" *

We have noticed the receipts of the Royal Academy

* Extract from the Preface of Shee's Rhymes on Art.

as resulting from the profits of the annual exhibitions; and as the public are but little acquainted with the objects on which they are employed, a brief statement of them may not be unacceptable, and we give it to the best of our ability.

It may readily be imagined that the current expenses of the household, in an establishment like that of Somerset House, are not of inconsiderable amount, and these are wholly defrayed by the Academy. But the expenses connected with the schools are of a much more extensive nature, and they are as permanent as those of the household. The students of the Academy are provided with an ample collection of casts from the best antique statues, from which they may study night and day under the guidance and instruction of the keeper, an artist of talent, appointed chiefly for this purpose, who receives a salary from the Royal Academy. There is also a school for the study of nature from living models, the expenses of which are considerable, and, like those of the antique academy, admit of no intermission.

There are professors appointed in the several branches of painting, sculpture, architecture, anatomy, and perspective, who are bound to deliver periodical lectures to the students on the subjects connected with their respective appointments, and each of these has a salary from the Academy. Added to these, there are the salaries of the secretary and librarian, and the expenses connected with a well-furnished library, to which the students have constant access. There are annual and biennial prizes distributed regularly to the successful candidates in painting, sculpture, drawing, and architecture, for which any student may offer himself, and which consist of gold and silver medals, and books on the subject of art, which are handsomely

bound for the occasion. All these are not furnished at a trifling expense, and the Academy provide for it annually.

In addition to this liberal encouragement, there are constantly two of the students in Italy, where they are entitled to remain for three years, at the sole expense of the Academy, from whom they receive an allowance of 100*l.* a year, besides a sum which is amply sufficient to defray all their travelling expenses, as well in returning as in going abroad. The students sent to Italy are selected from those who have previously obtained the gold medal either in painting, sculpture, or architecture.

To all these advantages students are admitted without any expense whatever to themselves, and the number received by the Academy is subject to no limitation.

It may well be imagined that a considerable sum must be necessarily devoted to the objects already enumerated; but it is regularly set apart by the Academy for these purposes from the funds which result from the profits of the annual exhibitions. These expenses are constant and permanent, but there are others incurred by the Academy, which it is necessary that they should at all times be prepared to meet. There are pensions for the widows of such members of the Academy as may not have been able to provide for them; and allowances to such of the members themselves to whom age and infirmity, or the pressure of misfortune, may have rendered such assistance necessary. The charitable donations of the Royal Academy to artists not belonging to their body, or their families, are at the same time very considerable; and for these they are only enabled to provide by the overplus which may have been left in their hands after

paying the current expenses enumerated, so that any diminution in the annual receipt must necessarily limit these acts of benevolence.

There are other expenses incurred by the Academy which might be added to those above mentioned; but enough has been already stated to prove, that the funds which are derived from the profits of the annual exhibitions are not wasted on objects of trivial importance, or suffered to remain unemployed with advantage. Indeed, when we consider that a body of artists support, by the profits of their own exertions, without any assistance from the government of the country, or from any other quarter whatever, the only efficient school of art in the kingdom for the gratuitous instruction of students, and unite in the endeavour to encourage rising merit, and to call forth the talent of those who may eventually become formidable rivals to themselves; we are bound to applaud the liberality of sentiment and disinterested public spirit of the Royal Academy, which has, in truth, effected more for the arts of the country than the splendid establishments which other nations have founded under the immediate protection of their respective governments.

Sir Joshua delivered two discourses in the year 1780; the first of which he gave on the 16th October, at the opening of the Academy in its present state.

He was busily employed at this time, and for several successive years, in completing his designs for the celebrated painted window, in New College Chapel at Oxford. In the lower range of this structure there were seven compartments, each of twelve feet in height and three in width, which were decorated with the allegorical figures of the four cardinal and three christian virtues, — Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, Prudence, Faith, Hope, and Charity. The figures are

accompanied by their several attributes; and they are all single, with the exception of the central one, in which Charity is personified with an attendant group of children. Above this, on a scale of ten feet by eighteen, is "The Nativity," a composition of thirteen figures, in which Northcote remarks, "that Sir Joshua had great advantage over Correggio, who, in his celebrated 'Notte,' introduces no light in the painting, but that which proceeds from the infant Saviour. The idea is grand," he continues, "though not of Correggio's invention; and Sir Joshua judiciously adopted it on this occasion, because, from the transparent medium on which the composition is painted, the light actually proceeds from that part from which the painter supposes it to emanate. Reynolds cannot, however, be said to have *copied* it; for his execution, both in *manner* and *circumstance*," continues Northcote, "gives it the effect of novelty."

The design for this work was purchased by the Duke of Rutland for 1200 guineas, and was unfortunately burnt at Belvoir Castle, with many other admirable performances; those of "The Cardinal Virtues" were left by Sir Joshua to the Marchioness of Thomond.

The execution of the window was intrusted to Mr. Jarvis, an eminent painter on glass, who was also employed on similar occasions by West: his portrait, with that of Sir Joshua himself, is introduced in the picture of "The Nativity." They are both represented as shepherds.

It seems to have been originally intended to distribute the figures in different parts of the chapel; but this idea was judiciously opposed by Sir Joshua, who prevailed on the parties concerned to have the west window prepared for the reception of the whole. Two

of his letters, illustrative of this subject, have been quoted by Mr. Malone. They are as follows: —

"I am extremely glad to hear that the Society have determined to place all our works together in the west window, to make one complete whole, instead of being distributed in different parts of the chapel. In my conversation with Mr. Jervais about it, he thought it might be possible to change the stone-work of the window, so as to make a principal predominant space in the centre, without which it will be difficult to produce a great effect. As Mr. Jervais is now at Oxford, I need add no more: I have already explained to him how much I wished that this alteration might be practicable."

In the subsequent letter, he says,— "Supposing this scheme to take place" (the alteration proposed above), "my idea is to paint, in the great space in the centre, 'Christ in the Manger,' on the principle that Coreggio has done it, in the famous picture called the 'Notte,' making all the light proceed from Christ. The tricks of the art, as they may be called, seem to be more properly adapted to glass painting than any other kind. The middle space will be filled with the Virgin, Christ, Joseph, and Angels; the two smaller parts on each side I shall fill with the Shepherds coming to worship, and the seven divisions below with the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the four Cardinal Virtues, which will make a proper rustic base, or foundation, for the support of the Christian religion. Upon the whole, it appears to me that chance has presented to us materials so well adapted to our purpose, that if we had the whole window of our own invention and contrivance, we should not, probably, have succeeded better."

In July, 1781, Sir Joshua made a tour to the Netherlands and to Holland, in company with his friend Mr. Metcalf, for the purpose of viewing the celebrated productions of the Dutch and Flemish schools. The account of this journey will be found among his writings, containing remarks on the pictures preserved in the various churches and cabinets which he visited. To these he has subjoined a very masterly character of Rubens.

As many of the works of Rubens, and other masters of the Flemish school, were to be sold in 1783, in consequence of the suppression of the greater part of the religious and monastic establishments in the Netherlands, Sir Joshua made another journey to Flanders, and laid out upwards of a thousand pounds in pictures, many of which were of considerable value. On viewing the works of Rubens a second time, they appeared to him much colder in tone than on the former occasion, and he could not at first account for this circumstance; "but he afterwards recollected," says Mr. Malone, "that when he first saw them he had his note-book in his hand, for the purpose of writing down short remarks, and imagined that as the eye passed quickly from the paper to the pictures, the colours derived a greater degree of richness and warmth from the contrast than they subsequently appeared to possess when viewed without this foil." Sir Joshua's observation appears to be reasonable; but we should feel more inclined to adopt the suggestion of Northcote, who thinks it probable that Reynolds had improved in the interim, and that his second impression was on that account less favourable. In support of this opinion, he remarks that Sir Joshua, on his first return from the Netherlands, thought his own pictures wanted

force; and it was observed that he afterwards painted with greater depth and brilliancy of colour.

It may also be suggested, that the first impression which is left on the mind of the spectator by many of Rubens's pictures is generally the most favourable: for when the spirit and enthusiasm of the painter are familiar to us, we are left more at liberty to criticise the works with which we may at first sight have been dazzled, and there are few of the productions of this great master which are free from serious imperfections.*

At this period Sir Joshua composed the elaborate notes with which he has illustrated Mr. Mason's translation of Du Fresnoy's Art of Painting, which, we have already remarked, the author was induced to complete by the offer which Reynolds made of contributing to the work. It was published shortly afterwards.

In the exhibition of 1781, Sir Joshua's "Thais," and his splendid composition of "The Death of Dido," drew immense crowds to Somerset House, and excited universal admiration and applause. Every picture, indeed, that he exhibited, appeared to increase his reputation; and though he had already effected so much, he never

* "While at Antwerp," observes Northcote, "Sir Joshua took particular notice of a young man of the name of De Gree, who had exhibited considerable talent as a painter. His father was a tailor, and he himself had been intended for some clerical office, but having formed a different opinion of his religion than was intended, from the books put into his hands by an Abbé, who was his patron, it was discovered that he would not do for a priest, and the Abbé therefore articled him to Gerrards, an artist of Antwerp. Sir Joshua received him on his arrival in England with much kindness, and strongly recommended him to pursue his profession in the metropolis; but De Gree was unwilling to consent to this, as he had been previously engaged by Mr. Latouche to proceed to Ireland. Even here Sir Joshua's friendly attentions did not cease, for he actually made the poor artist a present of 50 guineas to fit him for his Hibernian excursion."

relaxed in his study or his labours, but seemed to consider the excellence which he had already attained as little more than the means of farther advancement.

His noble portrait of Mrs. Siddons as "The Tragic Muse*," exhibited with "the Fortune-teller," in 1784, and his "Infant Hercules," painted for the Empress of Russia, and placed over the chimney-piece in the exhibition of 1788, called forth repeated bursts of enthusiastic delight.

"'The Infant Hercules,'" says Northcote, in speaking of this exhibition, "was the first picture which presented itself on entering the room, and it had the most splendid effect of any picture I ever saw."

Barry also, in his comments on Sir Joshua, observes: — "Nothing can exceed the brilliancy of light, the force and vigorous effect of his picture of 'The Infant Hercules strangling the Serpents;' it possesses all that we look for and are accustomed to admire in Rembrandt, united to beautiful forms and to an elevation of mind to which Rembrandt had no pretensions; the prophetical agitation of Tiresias and Juno, enveloped

* This portrait of Mrs. Siddons is said to be the only one on which Sir Joshua inscribed his name, as if content to risk his claims to the admiration of future ages on this single example of his matchless skill. It was written on part of the drapery, and on looking at the picture in its finished state, Mrs. Siddons stooped down to examine what she supposed to be a piece of classic embroidery, but which she found to be Sir Joshua's signature. She turned to the artist, on remarking the circumstance, and Reynolds immediately observed — "I could not lose the honour which this opportunity offered me of transmitting my name to posterity on the hem of your garment."

When the group representing Lady Cockburn and her children, exhibited by Sir Joshua in 1773, was first brought into the great room at Somerset House, all the artists then present were so much struck with its extraordinary beauty and splendour of effect, that they testified their approbation of its merits by loud and simultaneous applause.

with clouds, hanging over the scene, like a black pestilence, can never be too much admired, and are, indeed, truly sublime."

On receiving this commission from the Empress of Russia, "Sir Joshua debated long with himself," continues Northcote, "on what subject to fix which might be complimentary to the Empress; and at first I heard him say that he would paint the procession of our great Queen Elizabeth when she visited her camp at Tilbury, in the time of the threatened Spanish invasion. But at last he made choice of 'The Infant Hercules overcoming the Serpents when in his cradle,' as the most fit, in allusion to the great difficulties which the Empress had to encounter in the civilisation of her empire, arising from the rude state in which she found it. This picture he finished; it was a large and grand composition, and, in respect to beauty, colour, and expression, was equal to any picture known in the world. The middle group, which received the principal light, was exquisite in the highest degree."

Whether the compliment was ever explained to the Empress is uncertain: but soon after the picture arrived at St. Petersburgh, Count Woronzow, the Russian ambassador, waited on Sir Joshua to inform him that the work had been received, with two sets of his Discourses, one in French, the other in English, which had been sent with the picture by desire of Her Imperial Majesty. At the same time he delivered a gold box to Sir Joshua (on which was the Empress's portrait, enriched with very large diamonds), containing a highly complimentary letter written by Catherine with her own hand. The ambassador also left with Sir Joshua a copy of the following directions to himself: —

"MONS. LE COMTE WORONZOW. — I have read, and I may say, with the greatest avidity, those discourses pronounced at the Royal Academy of London by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which that illustrious artist sent me with his picture: in both productions one may easily trace a most elevated genius.

"I recommend to you to give my thanks to Sir Joshua, and to remit him the box I send as a testimony of the great satisfaction which the perusal of his Discourses has given me, and which I look upon as, perhaps, the best work that ever was written on the subject.

"My portrait, which is on the cover of the box, is of a composition made at my Hermitage, where they are now at work about impressions on the stones found there.

"I expect you will inform me of the price of the large picture on the subject of which I have already spoken to you in another letter.

"Adieu — I wish you well,

(Signed) "CATHERINE.

"St. Petersburgh, March 5. 1790."

"The portrait mentioned in the Imperial letter," continues Northcote, "was a basso relievo of Her Majesty; and Sir Joshua's executors afterwards received 1500 guineas for the painting, which is now at St. Petersburg."

On taking leave of this work, Reynolds said to a friend: — "There are ten pictures under it, some better, some worse." So earnest was his desire to obtain the highest excellence, and so conspicuous was his modesty in commenting upon the uncertainty of his practice.

"After Sir Joshua had finished the Hercules," con-

tinued Northcote, " he painted a very fine picture, in the same style of colour, on a three-quarter canvass, of a girl sleeping, resting with her head on her arm. This was one of his richest performances, and was in the exhibition of 1787, when Mr. Opie and myself were the managers for arranging the pictures; and we found great difficulty in placing it, being so powerful in its effect that it seemed to annihilate every other picture that was near it, and the conspicuous part of the room that was before desirable was no longer so for any picture when seen near his."

If an artist could begin his life over again, and recommence with new vigour the study of his profession where the order of nature obliges him to relinquish it, we might reasonably hope to draw nearer to perfection, by the union of excellences hitherto uncombined in the works of any single individual, than genius has been destined to approach. But human talent has its limits, and Reynolds now began to experience the uncertainty of the tenure by which he possessed it. In 1782, his friends were much alarmed by a paralytic affection, which, after many years' enjoyment of excellent health, attacked him at this period. It was but slight, however, and all traces of it were completely removed in the space of a few weeks. Still the effects of long-continued application, and of a too close confinement to his painting room, were gradually undermining Sir Joshua's constitution, and generating slowly, but surely, the disease which eventually proved fatal to him. An enlargement of the liver began to display itself in symptoms which, at first, did not appear to be connected with it, and the disorder was daily gaining ground. His general health was, however, apparently good, and he felt as well as he looked. At sixty-eight years of age he walked five miles on the

road, in returning from a visit to Mr. Burke, in Buckinghamshire; and we learn from Malone, who was with him at the time, that he did not stop once in the course of the walk, and that he did not complain of the slightest uneasiness from the exertion. At this time, his biographer remarks, he had the appearance of a man not much beyond fifty, and seemed as likely to live ten or fifteen years longer as any of his younger acquaintance.

There are few men whose conduct through life has been less calculated to provoke hostility than that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, but they who stand high in public estimation must be content to pay the penalty incurred by celebrity, which envy or malice are ever ready to inflict. "Among other attacks," says Mr. Farington, "which Reynolds sustained, was a formal effort made to show that he had no power of invention; that he was a decided plagiarist; and that his designs for groups of figures and of attitudes were *stolen*, as it was termed, from prints engraved from the works of various masters; and in the hope of lowering the high reputation of this great man, an artist was so illiberal as to undertake to prove this charge to the public. Mr. Hone, one of the Academicians, who painted portraits in oil, miniature, and crayons, painted a large picture in which he introduced a grave personage, surrounded by various works of art, and holding a wand with which he pointed to a number of scattered prints, and under them slight indications of such of Sir Joshua's pictures as in design most resembled them. The title which he gave to this picture was — *The Conjuror*. The principal figure in the composition was supposed to be a wizard, who had discovered by his skill in the black art these proofs of Sir Joshua's plagiarism. Desirous that his satire should have its

full effect, the painter sent it to the Royal Academy for exhibition, in 1775; but the Council "entrusted with the arrangement of the pictures perceived his illiberal intention, and of course rejected the performance. Disappointed here, he made an exhibition of his own works only, in which *The Conjuror* occupied a principal part; but this impotent attempt to lower Sir Joshua in the public estimation, produced little or no effect," and Reynolds himself treated the whole affair with the most philosophic indifference and contempt.

Towards the close of his career an occurrence took place which he could not, however, pass over without notice, and which he evidently felt very keenly. Malone informs us, often drawing a parallel between the characters of Lælius and Reynolds, that "as Lælius, admired and respected as he was, was repulsed from the consulate, Sir Joshua was, for a short time, by an unhappy misunderstanding, *driven* from the Presidency of the Royal Academy." "In recording this *unjust* accusation," says Farington, "against the members of the Royal Academy, Mr. Malone, in the warmth of his zeal for his friend, Sir Joshua, departed from his usual prudence and fidelity of statement." But Malone, there is every reason to believe, had derived his opinion on the subject from the statements of Sir Joshua himself, and Reynolds was not capable of stating a fact untruly, or liable to be influenced strongly by matters of ordinary importance.

Northcote says, on this point, that the incident alluded to has often been related by various writers, according, in some measure, to the feelings which they had in the business. "I shall endeavour," he adds, "to state the whole affair as impartially as possible, but, according to my own conception of the

business, which is very well told by an obscure author in a pamphlet published at the time."

"In the year 1790, probably at the request of the Earl of Aylesford, Sir Joshua possessed a very anxious desire to procure the vacant professorship of perspective in the Academy for Mr. Bonomi, an Italian architect; and, as Mr. Bonomi had not yet been elected an associate, and, of course, was not an academician, it became necessary to raise him to those stations in order to qualify him for becoming a professor. The election proceeded, and Mr. Gilpin was a competitor for the associateship with the Italian architect. The numbers on the ballot proved equal; and the President gave the casting vote for his friend, Mr. Bonomi, who was thereby advanced so far towards the professorship. On the vacancy of an academic seat by the death of Mr. Meyers, Sir Joshua Reynolds exerted all his influence to obtain it for Mr. Bonomi; but a spirit of resistance appeared, owing, I believe," continues Northcote, "to some misconception, or to some informality on the part of Sir Joshua, in producing some drawings of Bonomi's, and Mr. Fuseli was elected an academician by a majority of two to one. The President then quitted the chair with great dissatisfaction, and on the following day, the 12th of February, Sir Joshua Reynolds, who, for twenty-one years, had filled the chair of the Royal Academy with honour to himself and his country, sent his resignation to Mr. Richards, the Secretary of the Academy."

Thus far the statement of the fact is correct; but there are circumstances attending it which have not been hitherto explained, and which will lead us to conclude that Sir Joshua's resignation was not tendered in consequence of the result of the election alone, but was considered necessary by the additional

circumstance of a decided personal affront offered to himself by a member of the academy, and by the evident preconcerted determination of opposing his intention, which appears to have been manifested by a considerable portion of the electors.

The drawings mentioned in the preceding extract were intended as specimens of Mr. Bonomi's qualifications for the office of Professor of Perspective, and had been received and hung up, by order of the council, in the room where the election took place. When this order had passed, Sir Joshua himself gave directions that the drawings should be disposed of as already stated; and as it was not considered an affair of sufficient importance to need the previous sanction of the general meeting, the members assembled for the purpose of the election were not aware, with the exception of the members of council, that any such order had been voted.

As Mr. Bonomi was already an associate, and the Academy were supposed, in consequence, to be acquainted with his merits as an artist, it was not absolutely necessary that he should produce any new specimen of his abilities on this occasion, and it appears to have been unusual to do so. The members who brought forward Bonomi's opponent took advantage of the circumstance, and declared it to be irregular. One of them, accordingly, demanded of the President — by whose order the drawings had been produced? Sir Joshua replied, that he had himself given the order, and would probably have proceeded to state that he had done so in consequence of the order of council; but the member alluded to, on hearing the assertion, immediately got up and abruptly exclaimed, — "Then, I move that the drawings be removed!" He had friends enough present to carry his motion;

and on proceeding to the ballot, it was found that Mr. Fuseli had the greatest proportion of votes, and he was in consequence pronounced to be duly elected an academician, to the exclusion of Mr. Bonomi.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, well aware from the result of the election, and the conduct of the individual mentioned above, that the opposition to his wishes had been preconcerted, now quitted the chair, and retired from the meeting. The personal affront which he had also received, may be supposed to have influenced him in his view of the affair, and he accordingly sent in his resignation.

From what we have been able to collect on the subject, these appear to have been the grounds of Sir Joshua's retirement, and not the mere circumstance of the preference shown to Mr. Fuseli, and the exclusion of Lord Aylesford's supposed protégé. We certainly think that more respect was due to a President, who had filled the chair of the Academy for so many years with honour to himself and advantage to the Institution: and, that more consideration might reasonably have been expected towards so blameless and so respectable an individual as Sir Joshua, had he even been influenced by some feeling of partiality towards the rejected member, and some wish to oblige a nobleman of worth and distinction who interested himself in his welfare.*

* For many years afterwards, the individual to whom we have alluded made the Royal Academy the scene of contention; and his proceedings were, at one period, so highly irregular as to call for the interference of royalty. But death has long since removed him from the field of his exploits, and his latter years were passed in respectable tranquillity, and in the enjoyment of social intercourse with many of those with whom he had long been at variance.

He was a man of considerable mental endowments, but his celebrity as an artist would never have entitled him to rank very

At a meeting of the council which was held shortly afterwards, the letter which contained Sir Joshua's resignation formed the chief subject of debate. A letter from Sir William Chambers to Sir Joshua was also read, addressed to him in consequence of Sir William's interview with the King, in an early stage of the affair, and stating, among other flattering passages, expressive of the royal approbation, "that his Majesty would be happy in Sir Joshua's continuing in the President's chair."

Sir Joshua's letter to Sir William Chambers, in reply, was to the following effect:—"That he inferred, from the very gratifying manner in which the royal pleasure had been declared, that his conduct must have been hitherto satisfactory to his Majesty; and, if any inducement could make him depart from his original resolution, the will of his Sovereign would prevail: but that, flattered by his Majesty's approval to the last, there could be nothing that was not perfectly honourable in his resignation; and that, in addition to this determination, as he could not consistently hold the subordinate distinction of Royal Academician after he had so long possessed the chair, he begged also to relinquish that honour."

A general assembly of the Academicians was now held, to confer on this unfortunate event. The regret expressed by the members was general and sincere,

---

high in his profession; and it is probable that his efforts to attain superior authority in the management of the affairs of the Royal Academy were dictated by feelings of ambition alone.

Since his death the Academy has remained undisturbed by any internal dissensions, occupied chiefly in the direction of the schools, and engaged in no other contests with each other than those which result from a noble emulation to rival or surpass their competitors in art.

and a vote passed unanimously, that "The thanks of the Royal Academy be given to Sir Joshua Reynolds, for the able and attentive manner in which he had so many years discharged his duty as President of that Society." But, as any endeavours on the part of the Academy to alter Sir Joshua's determination appeared now to be equally useless and improper, especially as he had not acceded to the wish of the Sovereign, so graciously expressed in the letter which had been read, it was determined that a meeting should be shortly called, to fill the vacancy which had thus unhappily occurred.

The proposed meeting took place on the 13th of March, and the Academy, still moved by an anxious desire of conciliating their late President, as far as it was possible, consistent with the respect due to the Institution, as well as to the members themselves as individuals, agreed upon the following declaration: — "Resolved, that, upon inquiry, it is the opinion of this meeting, that the President acted in conformity with the intention of the council in directing Mr. Bonomi to send a drawing or drawings to the general meeting, to evince his being qualified for the office of professor of perspective; but that, the general meeting not having been informed of this new regulation of the council, nor having consented to it, as the laws of the Academy direct, the generality of the assembly judged their introduction irregular, and consequently voted for their being withdrawn."

This resolution was succeeded by another, which was as follows: — "Resolved, that Sir Joshua Reynolds's declared objection to his resuming the chair being done away, a committee be appointed to wait on Sir Joshua Reynolds, requesting him, that, in obedience to the gracious desire of his Majesty, and

in compliance with the wishes of the Academy, he would withdraw his letter of resignation." It was then determined that these resolutions be communicated to Sir Joshua Reynolds by the following members, — Messrs. West, Copley, Farington, T. Sandby, Bacon, Cosway, Catton, and the Secretary.

This committee accordingly waited upon Sir Joshua, "who received them," observes Farington, "with evident marks of satisfaction." They read to him the resolution of the Academy, and stated to him their own and the general wish of the members, that he would reconsider his determination, and consent to resume his situation as President of an Institution, of which his talents had been so long an essential support. Sir Joshua, in reply, expressed his gratitude for this honourable proceeding towards him, and said, he should with great pleasure accede to their wishes. He then invited the committee to dine with him, that day, in order to convince them that he returned to his office with sentiments of the most cordial amity. The committee reported the success of their mission to the General Assembly, and announced, at the same time, the agreeable intelligence that their President would appear in his place the same evening. Sir Joshua, accordingly, attended the meeting, and signified his having withdrawn his letter of resignation, but added, that he did not think himself authorised to resume the chair, until he had obtained his Majesty's leave." The King's gracious permission having been received, Sir Joshua appeared in the President's chair on the 16th March, 1790, and was received with every possible demonstration of cordiality and respect by a numerous assembly of the members.

Though the interval between Sir Joshua's resignation of the Presidency and his return to that office was

only twenty-two days, yet, in that short period, the prompt zeal of his admirers to offer him their testimonies of respect and condolence was displayed in many complimentary effusions, both in verse and prose. The poetical lines of the Earl of Carlisle are among the best of these compositions, but the feeling of regret was strong and general, whatever might have been the talent evinced in the expression of it.

On the 10th December, in the same year, Sir Joshua delivered his fifteenth and last Discourse, in which he took leave of the Academy; and, though he had not actually made his final resignation at that period, yet it is evident that he had it in contemplation, since he observed that his age and infirmities made it probable that this would be his last address; and that, excluded, as he was, from indulging his imagination in a distant and forward perspective of life, he trusted that he would be excused from turning his eyes back on the way that he had passed. He then took an interesting and instructive review of his professional career, and detailed, with great modesty and perspicuity, the means by which he rose to that high degree of eminence which is now so universally admitted. On this interesting occasion, Sir Joshua observed, that the intimate connection which he had maintained with the Royal Academy, ever since its establishment, and the social duties in which he and its members had been mutually engaged for so many years, rendered any profession of attachment on his part altogether superfluous; as, independent of other causes, such attachment would naturally have been produced, in such a connection, by the influence of habit alone. He modestly hinted at the little differences which had arisen, but expressed his wish that such recollections should be lost among the members in mutual esteem for talents and acquire-

ments, and that every controversy would be sunk in general zeal for the perfection of that art which was common to them all. In parting with the Academy, he declared that he should remember with pride, affection, and gratitude, the support with which he had been uniformly honoured from the commencement of the Institution; and that he should leave it with cordial wishes for its future concord, and with a well founded hope, that in that concord the auspicious origin of the Royal Academy might not be forgotten in the splendour of succeeding prospects. After expatiating on the exalted genius of his favourite master, he concluded with the following impressive words: —

"I feel a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these Discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of *Michael Angelo!*"

On hearing this discourse, a foreign artist of considerable celebrity observed, that, if he had only heard this final oration in praise of Michael Angelo, and seen that great national ornament, Somerset House, he should have been certain that the English were far advanced in the highest departments of art.

So great was Sir Joshua's professed admiration for this master, that his head was engraved on his seal, and he introduced his bust in that portrait which he painted of himself for the Royal Academy: in his portrait, now in the gallery at Florence, the name of Michael Angelo is also conspicuous on the paper which he holds in his hand.

"It was the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds," says Northcote, "that Michael Angelo was superior to the

ancients, as he once declared to me; and on my not according with him in that opinion, I remember he said,—'You have the strongest party in the argument, because you have the world on your side.' But at this time," continues his pupil and biographer, "I am more inclined to think with him, at least thus far, that in the works of Michael Angelo there always appears to be an excellent sentiment produced; but from the antique nothing of that which he inspires. The antique gives us, undoubtedly, a more perfect example of just proportions, and of characters. I apprehend the same qualities run through all their works of every species: their dramas seem to be the works of men of most powerful heads, and therefore the most proper models for the schools, as in them nothing that is wrong can be found, and we may therefore assist our judgment by the help of their examples, as infallible guides, which examples can be reduced to rules. But the feelings of the heart admit of but little assistance or improvement from fixed rules. Thus he who may have settled his notions of perfection from the models of the ancient dramas, and supposes that nothing can surpass them in any quality whatever, must be struck with astonishment and admiration when, for the first time, he contemplates the pages of Shakspeare, where such various sensations, subtle and refined, are described. Yet Shakspeare cannot, like the ancients, be admitted as a model for the schools, inasmuch as he is irregular and licentious, and his excellences, like all those of genius, cannot be taught. It must have been in this view that Sir Joshua saw a superiority in Michael Angelo over the antique."

We may observe, with reference to part of this critique, that the performances of Michael Angelo are not, in the originals, deficient in point of proportion,

although the prints, and more especially the early engravings from his works, are greatly overcharged and exaggerated. In character, he appears to have usually taken a highly poetical view of nature, and is more conspicuous for energy and sentiment than for simplicity and chasteness of expression. In his exquisite personifications of Adam and Eve we find, however, the most beautiful examples of simplicity; and when his subject did not appear to require more than ordinary vigour, Michael Angelo was fully capable of reining his enthusiasm, and tempering the exuberance of genius with truth.

Sir Joshua's admiration of the works of Michael Angelo has often been considered as affected; and the ordinary observer will be at a loss to imagine how they could have operated upon the style of a portrait painter. We have endeavoured to show, in other parts of this memoir, how far the works alluded to, as well as those of Raphael, may be studied with advantage by those who are not entitled to rank as historical painters; and must repeat, that we are convinced Sir Joshua was sincere in the expression of his feeling with respect to these masters. We are also convinced that he profited greatly by the study of their noble productions, and that the influence of the principles by which they rose to excellence may be evidently traced in the difference of his style from that of his immediate predecessors, as well as in the difference of his early manner from that which he adopted at subsequent periods. He had been taught by Michael Angelo and Raphael to appreciate the dignity of art, to look at nature with the eye of a poet, and to elevate the subjects of his pencil by combining intellectual beauty with the truth of individual representation. The style of portraiture of which Sir Joshua may be said to have

been the author is more indebted to the mind of the painter for its excellence than it is to the truth of his eye or the mechanical dexterity of his hand; and we may fairly assume that the study of the principles which formed the style of Michael Angelo and Raphael materially contributed to enlarge the views of art which Reynolds had originally taken, and to suggest the views of nature which he afterwards adopted when the treasures of the Vatican had shown him his deficiency.

Though now contemplating a secession from public life, Sir Joshua's love for his art, and his zeal for its advancement, still continued to operate as strongly as ever. He had amassed a large collection of valuable pictures, and a highly interesting collection of drawings and prints, which he liberally offered, as we have already stated, to the members of the Royal Academy, at a sum far below their acknowledged value. As circumstances prevented the Academy from availing themselves of this offer, Sir Joshua determined to make a temporary exhibition of them, and with this view he hired an apartment in the Haymarket, which had formerly been occupied by Ford the auctioneer. The price of admission was fixed at one shilling; and as the profits arising from the exhibition were generously given to his old servant Ralph Kirkley, the catalogue bore the title of "Ralph's Exhibition." It was written by Sir Joshua himself, and he employed his time in composing and arranging it, when he could no longer follow his profession.

In July, 1789, when he had nearly finished the portrait of Lady Beauchamp, "the last female portrait," says Malone, "that he ever painted, he, for the first time, perceived his sight so much affected, that he found it difficult to proceed; and, in a few months afterwards,

in spite of the aid of the most skilful occulists, he was entirely deprived of the sight of his left eye. After some struggles, lest his remaining eye should be also affected, he determined to paint no more, a resolution which, to him, was a very serious misfortune, since he was thus deprived of an employment that afforded him constant amusement, and which he loved more for its own sake than on account of the great emolument with which the practice of his art was attended. Still, however, he retained his usual spirits; was amused by reading, or hearing others read to him, and partook of the society of his friends with the same pleasure as formerly.*

"In October, 1791, having strong apprehensions that a tumour, accompanied by inflammation, which took place above the eye that had perished, might affect the other also, Sir Joshua became somewhat dejected. Every means were employed to disperse it without effect, and it was afterwards found to have been occasioned by extravasated blood, and to have had no connection with the optic nerve. Meantime he laboured under a much more dangerous disease, which deprived him both of his wonted spirits and appetite, though he was wholly unable to explain to his physicians the nature or seat of his disorder. During this period of great affliction to all his friends, his malady was by many supposed to be imaginary; and it was conceived that if he would but exert himself he could shake it off. This instance, however," continues Malone, "may serve to show that the patient best

* The last two portraits of gentlemen that Sir Joshua painted were those of the Right Hon. William Windham and George J. Cholmondeley, Esq. He afterwards attempted to finish the portrait of Lord Macartney, for which that nobleman had sat some time before, but he found himself unable to proceed.

knows what he suffers, and that few long complain of bodily ailments without an adequate cause; for at length, as we have stated, but not till about a fortnight before his death, the seat of his disease was found to be in his liver, of which the inordinate growth, as it afterwards appeared, had incommoded all the functions of life; and of this disease, which he bore with the greatest fortitude and patience, he died, after a confinement of nearly three months, at his house in Leicester Square, on Thursday evening, February 23. 1792, in the 69th year of his age.*

"Reynolds seemed, from the beginning of his illness, to have had a presentiment of the fatal termination with which it was finally attended; and therefore considered all those symptoms as delusive, on which the ardent wishes of his friends led them to found a hope of his recovery. He, however, continued to use all the means of restoration proposed by his physicians, and for some time to converse daily with his intimate acquaintance; and when, at length, he was obliged to confine himself to his bed, awaited the hour of his dissolution, as was observed by one of his friends soon after his death, with an equanimity rarely shown by the most clebrated Christian philosophers."

"During the course of Sir Joshua's active life," says Northcote, "he had passed his days in a state of professional honour and social enjoyment that has scarcely been equalled, and never surpassed, by any of his predecessors in art. He had been blessed also with an excellent constitution by nature. Of these advantages he was very sensible; and I well remember a

* On his body being opened, his liver, which ought to have weighed about five pounds, was found to have increased to an extraordinary size, weighing nearly eleven pounds. It was also somewhat scirrhous.

remark he once made to me on the subject: — 'I have been very fortunate,' he said, 'in an uninterrupted share of good health and success, for thirty years of my life; therefore, whatever ills may attend on the remainder of my days, I shall have no right to complain.'

"When a friend attempted to give him comfort in the hope of returning health, he calmly answered, 'I know that all things on earth must have an end, and now I am come to mine.'

"The mental sufferings of Sir Joshua, under the failure of his sight, were, perhaps," continues Northcote, "much greater than he was willing to acknowledge; and he who, during his former life, had been perpetually and earnestly employed in works destined to delight the world, and add, in part, to the immortality even of the illustrious, when represented as he could represent them, being now prevented, by the infirmities of human nature, from occupying himself in those studies which had raised his name so high, was reduced to fill up the tedious, lingering hours, by such humble amusements as could afford any consolation in a state so new to him. Part of his attention was bestowed upon a little tame bird, which, like the favourite spider of the prisoner in the Bastile, served to pass away a lonely hour. But this proved, also, a fleeting pleasure; for on a summer's morning, the window of the chamber being by accident left open, the little favourite took to flight, and was irrecoverably lost, although its master wandered for hours in the square before the house, in the fruitless hope of reclaiming it.

"His inability to pursue his profession did not, however, sour his mind against the increasing fame of his contemporaries; and such was his opinion with respect to the progress which the arts had then made in Eng-

land, and, as he imagined, were still making towards perfection, that in conversation with me once," Northcote still proceeds to observe, "he ventured to predict, that the arts would so improve in this country, and in future years arrive to such a state of excellence, that 'all we can now achieve,' he said, 'will appear like children's work, in comparison with what will be done.'

"Whether portrait painting will ever be carried much farther than Sir Joshua has carried it, I have my doubts; but in respect to the arts in general, I think our countrymen fully qualified to verify his prediction. It is my firm opinion, that had there been the same encouragement and opportunity offered to the arts in this country as have been afforded to them in Italy and France, we should have seen how British powers and talents would have burst forth, and also that laudable ambition, that activity and spirit of enterprise, that good sense and sound judgment, that originality and strength of character, which so particularly mark the people of this empire, that freedom of thinking for themselves, which prevents the servile imitation of each other, so constantly found in most countries, especially in France, — when these are all considered, how much more than probable is it, that we should have seen such works of excellence and variety produced, as no age or country have ever seen equalled."

We think the honest enthusiasm of Sir Joshua's best pupil is not without reasonable foundation. If encouragement had not been wanting, the arts of this country would have now stood much higher than they do; and it is by encouragement alone that we can hope to see them make farther progress. The means of study now afforded to artists are greater than they have ever been in England; and the merit displayed in almost every department holds out a bright prospect

of excellence. A liberal, judicious, and steady support, is all that is wanting to realise the expectation which the talent of the country has raised: if that expectation should eventually fail to be realised, the unhappy result cannot fairly be attributed either to the state of the art or to the want of capacity in the artist; it will be, clearly, to those who should have fostered them by timely encouragement, that the blame and the responsibility of the failure must attach.

Sir Joshua had appointed, as executors, his friends, Messrs. Burke, Metcalfe, and Malone; and soon after his decease, the following propositions, respecting the funeral arrangements, were made by these gentlemen to the Royal Academy: —

"That it is the wish of the executors of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the body be conveyed to the Royal Academy on the evening before the interment, and that the friends who attend him may be admitted to proceed from thence.

"They leave to the Royal Academy to consider of the propriety of inviting such persons of distinction as used to attend their annual meetings, such as ministers of state, foreign ministers, presidents of societies, &c. &c., as they think proper.

"Sir Joshua's undertaker to wait on Sir William Chambers to receive the instructions of the council for the provision of coaches for the Academy, cloaks, &c. &c."

These proposals were instantly agreed to by the council of the Royal Academy; but Sir William Chambers, who had been appointed by the King surveyor of the buildings at Somerset House, felt himself obliged to withhold his consent, till his Majesty's pleasure on the subject should be known. He was bound by the duties of his office not to permit the

building to be used for any other purposes than those which are specified in the grant, which runs thus: — "That the Academy cannot let or lend any part thereof for any other purpose than that to which it is appropriated."—"It therefore appears," said Sir William Chambers, "that however desirous we may be to show such a mark of respect to our late President, we are not in possession of the power."

Mr. West then undertook to state to the King all the circumstances respecting the application of the executors, and in communicating the result to the general assembly informed them, that his Majesty had signified his pleasure that the wish of the executors be complied with. Having thus obtained the royal sanction, a deputation of members immediately waited on the executors, and it was agreed that the body should be removed to the Academy; that one of the apartments should be hung with black, and otherwise prepared to receive it in the customary form, and also that the order of procession should be settled in conformity with the advice of the Herald's office.

It was determined that the general body of the members of the Royal Academy, the academicians, associates, and the honorary officers, should follow the remains of their illustrious President immediately after the pall-bearers, his own family, and the executors.

In compliance with the resolution adopted, the body was conveyed to the Royal Academy on the evening of March 2. 1792; and the parties appointed to attend the funeral assembled at Somerset House at half-past ten on the following morning.

At nine o'clock, on the day of interment, peace officers were placed at the corner of each street lead-

ing to the Strand, Fleet Street, or Ludgate Hill, in order to prevent carriages from passing by either of those approaches during the course of the morning: all carriages from the west end of the town, which were going into the city, passed along Holborn and Newgate Street.

From ten o'clock all the shops between Somerset House and St. Paul's, where the remains of Sir Joshua are interred, were shut up, and the whole space between Temple Bar was crowded with innumerable persons waiting to see the funeral obsequies: from that hour, till twelve, the streets were filled with the mourning coaches coming to Somerset House, and with the carriages of the nobility and gentry who were invited to attend the mournful ceremony. At a quarter past twelve the coffin was put into the hearse. The company were conveyed in forty-two mourning coaches, and forty-nine carriages, belonging to the noblemen and gentlemen who attended, followed in the train. The pall was borne by three dukes, two marquisses, and five other noblemen.

At half-past twelve the procession began to move; and the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs honoured the ceremony by coming to Somerset Place, where an officer's guard of thirty men was placed at the great court gate. After the procession had passed through Temple Bar, the gates were shut, by order of the Lord Mayor, to prevent any interruption from the passing of carriages, to or from the city, by that avenue.

The crowd of spectators was immense, as well in the church as in the streets. The shops, as we have mentioned, were closed, the windows of the houses were filled, and the people, of every condition, assembled to witness the order of the funeral, seemed to

share in the general sorrow, and looked on in silence, with awful respect.*

The procession returned to the Royal Academy in nearly the same order as that in which it set out, and the last carriage reached Somerset House at half an hour past four. It was not till then that the gates of Temple Bar were thrown open for the admission of the public.

When the academicians and the rest of the company who returned had assembled, Mr. Burke entered the room; and, in the name of the family and executors, expressed his thanks for their respectful homage to the deceased, but was prevented by his feelings from saying more than a few words, — he burst into tears and departed.†

The humble and dutiful thanks of the Academy were afterwards offered to his Majesty, for his gracious permission to effect their ardent wishes, in doing honour to their late President, and "for enabling them, by a splendid concurrence with the efforts of Sir Joshua's executors, to gratify the wishes of the public." The address was presented to the King by Mr. West. An address of thanks was also voted to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, for their considerate and highly flattering attention. Finally, it was resolved that the members of the Academy should continue to wear mourning for the space of one month.

* A more detailed account of the funeral ceremony will be found at the end of the life. It was written by a friend, the day after the funeral, and published in several of the newspapers.

† To each of the gentlemen who attended on this occasion was presented a print engraved by Bartolozzi, representing a female clasping an urn, accompanied by the Genius of Painting, holding in one hand an extinguished torch, and pointing with the other to a sarcophagus, on the tablet of which was written, —

"Succedet famâ, vivusque per ora feretur."

"Thus were deposited," observes Mr. Farington, "the venerable relics of Sir Joshua Reynolds, doubly hallowed by a nation's respect and by the tears of private friendship. The manifestation of the general wish to do honour to his memory has been fully shown. The assemblage of so many persons of the highest rank, and of those who were most esteemed for their talents, and reverenced for their virtues, uniting to pay their respectful homage to departed excellence, may, with grateful feelings, be recorded as a lasting proof of the high esteem in which he was held by the most refined classes of society; and the decorum of the public on the solemn occasion was not less honourable to the deceased than to the state of popular feeling.

"The mortal remains of Sir Joshua Reynolds having been laid in their place of rest, the void which his departure suddenly caused in a very large circle of friends and admirers seemed, at first, to be an irreparable calamity; the deep regret, therefore, for the loss of an artist whose works had so long been a source of delight, and whose character was so pure and refined as to be a pattern to society, naturally occasions many expressions of the common feeling to issue from the press, which appeared either in the daily journals, or other channels of public communication." They are remarkable, not so much on "account of any literary or critical merit which they possess, as for the expression of that sentiment which generally prevailed in the metropolis and country on the recent misfortune." The affectionate eulogium of Mr. Burke has been often before the public; but it should always have a place in the life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and we feel that we cannot dispense with it: —

"His illness was long, but borne with a mild and

cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenor of his whole life. He had from the beginning of his malady a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness had, indeed, well deserved.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that description of the art, in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve, when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of history, and the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits, he appeared not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to be derived from his paintings.

"He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

"In full affluence of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art, and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign

powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinising eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind, powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters, his social virtues in all the relations and all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to excite some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.

"HAIL! AND FAREWELL!"

By his last will, which was made on the 5th of November preceding his death, Sir Joshua left the greater part of his fortune to his niece, Miss Palmer, afterwards Marchioness of Thomond; ten thousand pounds in the funds to her younger sister, Mrs. Gwatkin, the wife of Robert Lovel Gwatkin, Esq. of Killiow, in the county of Cornwall; a considerable legacy to his friend the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, with whom he had lived in great intimacy for more than thirty years; and various memorials to other friends, of which we subjoin an account.*

* "To the Earl of Upper Ossory, any picture of his own painting, remaining undisposed of at his death, that his Lordship should choose.

"To Lord Palmerston, 'the second choice.'

"To Sir Abraham Hume, Bart., 'the choice of his Claude Lorraines.'

"To Sir George Beaumont, Bart., his 'Sebastian Bourdon,—the Return of the Arc.'

"In his stature, Sir Joshua Reynolds was rather under the middle size. He was in height nearly five feet six inches, of a florid complexion, roundish, blunt features, and a lively, pleasing aspect; not corpulent, though somewhat inclined to it, but extremely active. With manners highly polished and agreeable, he possessed an uncommon flow of spirits, but always under the strictest regulation, which rendered him, at all times, a most pleasing and desirable companion. Such was the undeviating propriety of his deportment, that wherever he appeared, he invariably, by his example, gave a tone of decorum to the society. With a carriage the most unassuming, he always commanded that personal respect which was shown him on all occasions. No man was more fitted for the seat of authority. When acting in a public capacity, he united

---

"To the Duke of Portland, 'the Angel Contemplation — the upper part of the Nativity.'

"To Edmond Malone, Philip Metcalfe, James Boswell, Esqs., and Sir William Scott (now Judge of the Court of Admiralty), 200*l.* each, to be laid out, if they should think proper, in the purchase of some picture at the sale of his collection, 'to be kept for his sake.'

"To the Reverend William Mason, 'the Miniature of Milton, by Cooper.'

"To Richard Burke, jun., Esq., his 'Cromwell,' by Cooper.

"To Mrs. Banbury, 'her son's picture;' and to Mrs. Gwyn, 'her own picture with a turban.'

"To his nephew, William Johnston, Esq., of Calcutta, his watch, &c.

"To his old servant, Ralph Kirkley (who had lived with him twenty-nine years), 1000*l.*

"Of this will, he appointed Mr. Burke, Mr. Metcalfe, and the present writer, executors.

"In March, 1795, his fine collection of pictures by the ancient masters was sold by auction for 10,319*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*; and in April, 1796, various historical and fancy pieces of his own painting, together with some unclaimed portraits, were sold for 4505*l.* 18*s.* His very valuable collection of drawings and prints has been since disposed of."

dignity with ease; in private society he was ever ready to be amused, and to contribute to the amusement of others; and was always attentive to receive information on every subject that presented itself; and by the aid of an ear-trumpet he was enabled to partake of the conversation of his friends with great facility and convenience. He was very observant of character; but if he made remarks upon singularity or vanity, it was with playful delicacy. On dispositions of a more offensive kind he seldom expressed his feelings, but guarded himself against obtrusive advances by gently shifting his attention to some other object. He was very easy of access, and the young artists who were desirous to benefit by his advice found no difficulty in obtaining it; it was always given frankly and kindly, with great sincerity, but with as much encouragement as truth would allow.

"If it were asked, how Sir Joshua appeared to stand in his own opinion of himself, the answer would be, that he was an exemplary instance of modesty. To the compliments which he received he listened and bowed, but it was rather as one submitting to the remarks that were made, by which he might profit, than the complacency of self-approbation. He never justified the encomiums of admiring spectators of his works, by reasoning upon them. Having performed what he undertook to do, he left others to judge of the quality of his productions. He would occasionally notice some difficulty he had found in executing a work, to account for some questionable appearance, or to show the necessity of sometimes trespassing a little upon truth, in order to satisfy the eye; but such remarks were only made to artists, and were always accompanied with a caution against the practice, except where indispensably necessary. In painting, as in

music, deviations from strict rules are occasionally required; and to justify these, the artist can only refer to feelings which to him supply the place of laws. It is recorded in a late publication, that when Haydn, the celebrated musical composer, was requested to give his reasons for certain unusual transitions or modulations in his work, he merely answered, 'I did it because it was best so.'

"In professional application, Sir Joshua Reynolds, as before stated, was an extraordinary example of persevering industry. It has been justly observed, that 'he was never wearied into despondency by miscarriage, nor elated into neglect by success.' His art was always in his mind, and, as it was truly said, 'when the *man* went abroad, he did not leave the *painter* at home.' All nature and all art was his academy; and his mind was constantly awake, ever on the wing, comprehensive, vigorous, discriminating, and retentive. With taste to perceive all the varieties of the picturesque, judgment to select, and skill to combine what would serve his purpose, few have ever been empowered by nature to do more from the funds of his own genius; and none ever endeavoured more to take advantage of the labours of others, in making a splendid and useful collection, for which no expense was spared; his house was filled to the remotest corners with casts from the antique, pictures, statues, drawings, and prints, by the various masters of all the different schools and nations. Those he looked upon as his library; with this advantage, that they decorated at the same time that they instructed. They claimed his constant attention; objects, at once, of amusement, of study, and of competition.

"In portrait painting, the general demands upon composition are limited; and as its rules may be ap-

plied with a degree of laxity, it affords the artist but comparatively little exercise to prepare him for higher exertions: the painter, therefore, of extensive practice in that department, whatever may be his natural talents, must, in respect to original composition, be liable to those dangers of inactivity so judiciously pointed out in the Discourses of the President himself. This, in fact, was precisely his own situation. He was not called upon by the regular habits of his practice for any extensive exercise of his creative powers, and consequently he was not ready and expert either in inventing or combining the requisite materials of historical art, whenever he ventured upon that department. This was, doubtless, the cause that he did not sufficiently exert the independence of his own genius, and that he consented, perhaps too easily, to accept assistance from the conceptions of others; but to the hints he thus occasionally borrowed, it must be acknowledged that he always gave such an air of novelty, and applied them to his own purposes with such admirable skill, that they often acquired a value they did not before possess; and his compilations had almost as much originality as if nature and the resources of his own mind had supplied every part.

"Yet this deficiency must have been the source of innumerable difficulties and impediments in every large work, and no doubt deterred him from many a lofty undertaking to which an active imagination would be continually inviting him. But though he could not attempt to rival Michael Angelo and Raffaelle in their elevated line of art," he was able to apply the principles by which they were regulated to his own peculiar department; "and from what he has accomplished in this way, he will be ranked with the most distinguished geniuses who have adorned the profession. The

world, in truth, scarcely knew the fascinations of colour, in its most impressive combinations with light and shade, till the works of Reynolds had been seen. Even to historical subjects, in many instances, he gave a charm that was before unknown. His Ugolino is an eminent example of pathos and force of expression, to which his excellent management of colour, and light and shade, greatly contributed. His picture of the 'Nativity' had all the splendour and harmony that colour could give; but these qualities were applied to that grave, but simple, subject with so much judgment and feeling, that the whole appeared a scene of holy mystery; nor could the imagination have been more powerfully affected if the same scene had been illustrated by the forms of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle.

"From the fortuitous nature of his practice, the works of Sir Joshua were liable to inequality. Proceeding without those guides which alone could secure to him the full result of the great powers which nature had given him, and never contented to repeat what he had happily done before, every picture was an experiment on some project of improvement suggested by his incessant endeavours to reach something yet unattained either by himself or others.

"The great practice and indefatigable industry of Sir Joshua gave him an extraordinary facility of execution. His pencil was never mannered, but free, easy, and varied. His touch gave life and character; it had something magical in it: expressing the form intended without the least appearance of labour, and leaving no marks of a mechanical process; so that, in copying his pictures, it is difficult to trace either the mode of producing them or the stages of his progress.

"Though the style of Sir Joshua was necessarily ornamental, there was nothing in it that should war-

rant the assertion, that he was naturally incapable of a more elevated practice. His compositions are animated and sensible; and they, moreover, evince a strong perception of beauty, dignity, and grace; from these elements, it seems probable that the *grandest* style might, with due cultivation, have been produced; but certainly, the grandeur of Reynolds would have corresponded with the simplicity of his mind, which was devoted to nature and truth, and would have had nothing of that inflated character, which is too often seen in vain attempts at sublimity."*

When the greater part of those who were the friends and admirers of Reynolds had passed away from the scene of his renown, and other painters of eminence had risen high in public favour, and called the public attention to their successful exertions, the fame of Sir Joshua enjoyed a temporary repose. His name, indeed, was never mentioned without veneration, and sons had learned from their fathers to pronounce it with respect; but his works were dispersed in many private collections, and the present generation had no sufficient data by which they could appreciate the extent of his powers.

A few years after the establishment of the British Institution, an establishment as honourable to its original projectors as it has been advantageous to the arts of the country, it occurred to the directors, that if an exhibition could be formed, which should consist entirely of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the accomplishment of such a measure would be, in every way, desirable. "A display of this nature, they conceived, would be a high gratification to the public, and equally delightful and advantageous to artists.

* Farington's Memoirs.

Great exertions were accordingly made to procure the finest examples of his productions that could be obtained, and the several proprietors of Sir Joshua's pictures complied most liberally with the wishes of the directors.

"The number of pictures exhibited amounted to 142, and when the arrangement was completed, the exhibition was preceded by a grand commemoration dinner, which took place on Saturday, May 8. 1813. The Prince Regent (who was then President of the Institution) had announced his intention of honouring the dinner with his presence. His Royal Highness arrived at the British Gallery at five o'clock to view the exhibition, and he was graciously pleased to express the highest admiration, both of the pictures and their arrangement. A short time before seven, the Regent was conducted from the Gallery by the Marquis of Stafford, through a temporary covered way, to Willis's Rooms. The Prince Regent sat as president of the British Institution, having a bust of Sir Joshua Reynolds placed behind him. The Marquis of Stafford sat on the left hand of the Prince Regent, and, as Deputy President, he officiated, giving the toasts, &c.

"His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland's band was stationed in an adjoining room, and performed several select and appropriate pieces during and after dinner. To 'the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds,' was a toast drank with enthusiasm and feeling.

"About half-past nine the Prince Regent left the dining-room, and was reconducted by the Marquis of Stafford to the Gallery, which was lighted up on the occasion. The brilliancy and rich harmonious colouring of Sir Joshua's pictures, which sparkled on the walls; the elegant assemblage of animated beauty who

graced the evening show; the great number of the nobility, statesmen, and other distinguished persons of rank, consequence, and intellectual attainments, that were assembled with their Prince, to be delighted, and to honour the memory of the illustrious dead, gave the whole a most fascinating and grand effect. It was, indeed, 'the feast of reason, and the flow of soul.'

"Sir Joshua Reynolds had been dead more than twenty years, and almost a new generation had risen up, whose taste had been formed upon works that had been exhibited to the public since his time. The majority of spectators were but imperfectly acquainted with his works, and such an accumulation of splendid art had been seen by none; it is not wonderful, therefore, that this magnificent display should have operated so powerfully. The public prints became the vehicle of declamatory and critical praise, of which some idea may be formed by the specimens here quoted. The following observations were published soon after the Exhibition was opened:—

"'Morning Post, May 13. 1813.

"'*The British Institution. Collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's Paintings.*

"'Yesterday will long remain memorable in the annals of the British arts, from its opening to the view of the public the paintings of the brightest ornament of our national school, liberally contributed by the various possessors, to be exhibited in honour of his memory, and for the benefit of the fine arts in general. Never before, we will venture to say, in this, or in any other nation, was so proud a monument reared by one man, as is here erected to the honour and character of his country, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The diction-

ary of praise would be exhausted before we could express the pleasure we experienced in viewing this noble collection. We have seen, and seen with wonder, many splendid galleries, containing selections from all the great masters,

'From grave to gay, from lively to severe.'

But never till now did we taste all this variety of gratification springing from one source; the amazing work of one mighty hand. It is impossible to describe the sensations with which the mind is overwhelmed on entering the British Gallery. The senses at first refuse to grasp at the large prospect of delight, and the earliest emotions are those of confusion and disorder. But we come by degrees to be reconciled to the magic that surrounds us, and go from room to room, and from picture to picture, experiencing all the diversity of grateful sensations, which so interesting a spectacle is sure to produce. To endeavour in this paper to communicate any idea of these would be vain; we therefore confine ourselves to the general statement in saying, that here is provided an entertainment full of the dearest recollections to our elder artists; — full of instruction to their juniors, in tracing a Reynolds through a course of forty years; — full of national glory, and fraught with unmeasureable pleasure to all, while it is calculated to lay the foundation of such improvement in the arts, as we trust will raise Britain even to a higher rank than she has yet held among the nations.'

"In the Observer, the following appeared on the 16th of May, 1813: —

"'Genius, like Egypt's Monarchs, timely wise,
Constructs its own memorial ere it dies.'

"'Never has it fallen to the lot of genius in this

country to be so highly honoured as in the person of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Surrounded and admired, during a long life, by all that was splendid in opulence, or that was dignified in rank, all that was lovely in beauty, all that was powerful in talents, all that was estimable in virtue —his death was universally felt to be a national calamity, an unexampled respect was paid to his memory, he was followed to the grave by the most noble and distinguished individuals in the land, and the metropolis assumed an exterior of grief, which, until that period, had been reserved for royalty alone.

"'The works of this great artist, diffused throughout the empire, have long been the delight of every one capable of appreciating excellence. The governors of the British Institution, having conceived the magnificent idea of collecting a number of the most highly esteemed of those works, proceeded with that laudable ardour, by which they have on so many occasions been actuated, to execute their intention; and the public were on Monday last admitted to witness the triumph of British art, which is the result of their exertions.

"'Language is inadequate to express the effect of this unprecedented assemblage of genuine splendour. That admiration which the sight of a single fine production of Sir Joshua's cannot but always inspire, is here increased and sublimed till the mind is almost overwhelmed by its intensity. An awful and indescribable sensation— elevating conviction of the greatness of human powers mingled with melancholy reflection on the shortness of their duration — must be experienced by the beholder. But what will unquestionably be the ultimate and triumphant feeling of the generous and patriotic breast, is exultation that England has given birth to a painter of such exalted

genius and such refined taste — a painter who, in immortalising himself, has contributed with the kindred spirits of a Shakspeare, Newton, and a Chatham, to confer on his country that character by which alone a civilised and intellectual world is distinguished from a savage and barbarous nation.

" ' The present exhibition will for ever set at rest the question which by some has been so strangely raised as to the competency of Sir Joshua Reynolds to the attainment of excellence in the highest department of art, had a corresponding disposition on the part of the public induced him to direct his studies to that object. No one can hesitate to pronounce in the affirmative, who contemplates the Ugolino, the Cardinal Beaufort, or the Infant Jupiter. Of his talents in compositions of a less dignified but more generally pleasing nature, the Infant Academy, the Robin Goodfellow, and the Gipsy Fortune-teller, afford most exquisite specimens. But the taste of the times in which Sir Joshua lived compelled him to devote himself principally to portrait-painting; and the consequence was, that to that part of the art he imparted an elevation which it had never before enjoyed. Many of the finest of his performances of that description are in the British Gallery, and they exhibit the most profound knowledge of composition, colouring, and expression. Among the most prominent of these are the portraits of Dr. Johnson, Sterne, Goldsmith, Dr. Burney, the Marquis of Granby, Admiral Keppell, Mr. Whitbread, Mrs. Robinson, Lady Hamilton, Mr. Tomkins, Mr. Dunning, the Duke of Orleans, &c.'

" To these specimens many others might be added; for the press poured forth its praise in every shape and from every quarter; but what has been given will suffice to show how much public feeling was excited by

that memorable display of the works of our illustrious countryman."*

A general list of the most considerable of Sir Joshua's historical and miscellaneous pieces may not be unacceptable to the reader, and we give it, as extracted from Malone, with the prices paid for the pictures, and the purchasers' names. Subjoined is Mr. Farington's list of the pictures sent at various periods by Sir Joshua to the exhibitions of the Incorporated Society of Artists, and those of the Royal Academy.

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
Garrick, between Tragedy and Comedy	300 gs.	The Earl of Halifax. Since his death, sold to Mr. Angerstein, for 250 guineas.
Thais (Emily Pott)	100	Hon. Mr. Greville.
Cleopatra dissolving the pearl (Kitty Fisher)	—	—
Venus chiding Cupid for learning arithmetic	100	The Earl of Charlemont.
Another, — the same subject	100	Sir B. Boothby, Bart.
A Captain of Banditti	35	John Crewe, Esq.
A Shepherd Boy	50	Lord Irwin.
Count Ugolino	400	The Duke of Dorset.
A Boy in a Venetian dress	—	Ditto.
Lesbia	75	Ditto.
Wang y Tong, a Chinese	70	Ditto.
A Gipsy telling fortunes	350	Ditto.
A Boy with a drawing in his hand	50	Ditto.
Beggar Children	—	Ditto.
Covent Garden Cupid	—	Ditto.
Cupid, as a link-boy	—	Ditto.
A Boy with a child on his back, and cabbage-nets in his hand	—	Ditto.
The Comic Muse (Mrs. Abington)	—	Ditto.

* Farington's Memoirs.

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
A Bacchante (M^e. Baccelli)	—	The Duke of Dorset.
A Girl with a bird-cage	—	Ditto.
The Calling of Samuel	50 gs.	Ditto.
Another, — the same subject	75	Earl of Darnley.
Mr. and Mrs. Garrick, sitting on a garden-seat; Mr. Garrick reading to her	150	The Hon. T. Fitzmaurice.
A Girl with a mouse-trap	50	Count D'Ademar.
A Landscape	50	Earl of Aylesford.
A sleeping Boy	50	Ditto.
A Landscape	50	Sir B. Boothby, Bart.
The Marchioness Townshend, Mrs. Gardiner, and the Hon. Mrs. Beresford, decorating the Statue of Hymen	450	Viscount Mountjoy.
Hope nursing Love	—	Lord Holland.
Another, — the same subject	—	Earl of Inchiquin.
Another, — the same subject	150	Henry Hope, Esq.
A Strawberry Girl	50	Earl of Carysfort.
A Nymph (Mrs. Hartley) and Young Bacchus	—	Ditto.
The Snake in the Grass (this has been called Love untying the zone of Beauty)	200	Ditto.
Another	A present.	Henry Hope, Esq.
Another	100 gs.	Prince Potemkin.
The Continence of Scipio	500	Ditto.
The Nativity (a design for the window of New College Chapel in Oxford)	1200	The Duke of Rutland.
The Infant Jupiter	100	Ditto.
An Old Man reading a Ballad	—	Ditto.
The Calling of Samuel	100	Ditto.
A Boy praying	50	Sent to France by Mr. Chamier, in 1778.
The Death of Dido	200	Mr. Bryant.

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
The Theory of Painting -	—	In the Royal Academy.
Another - -	—	In the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin.
A Shepherd Boy - -	—	Ditto.
A Shepherdess with a Lamb - -	—	Ditto.
A Girl with a kitten -	—	Ditto.
A Girl with a muff -	—	Ditto.
Cælia lamenting the Death of her Sparrow (Mrs. Collyer) - -	—	—
L'Allegro (Mrs. Hale); several figures in the background - -	—	Lord Harewood.
Robinetta (the Hon. Mrs. Tollemache) - -	—	—
Diana (Lady Napier) -	—	—
Diana (the Duchess of Manchester) - -	—	The Duke of Manchester.
Master Wynne, as St. John - -	—	—
Master Crewe, as Henry VIII. - -	—	John Crewe, Esq.
Master Herbert, in the character of Bacchus -	75 gs.	Lord Porchester.
Juno (Lady Blake) -	—	—
Hebe (Miss Meyer, a whole-length figure on a half-length canvass)	—	—
Melancholy (Miss Jones)	—	—
Young Hannibal (a boy in armour) - -	—	—
Francis, Duke of Bedford, as St. George; with his brothers, Lord John and Lord William Russel - -	—	—
The Fortune-teller (Lady Charlotte and Lord H. Spencer) - -	—	The Duke of Marlborough.
Miranda (the Hon. Mrs. Tollemache) and Caliban - - - -	—	—
St. Agnes (Mrs. Quarington) - - -	50	R. P. Knight, Esq.

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
The Triumph of Truth (Dr. Beattie, with two figures representing Truth and Falsehood)	—	Dr. Beattie.
A Boy laughing - -	50 gs.	— Bromwell, Esq.
Ariadne - -	35	W. Lock, Esq.
Dionysius Areopagita -	—	—
The Captive (this has been called the Banished Lord and Cartouche) -	80	Charles Long, Esq.
The Calling of Samuel -	—	Ditto.
Lady Sarah Bunbury, sacrificing to the Graces	—	Sir C. Bunbury, Bart.
The Infant Moses in the Bulrushes - -	125	The Duke of Leeds.
Edwin - -	55	Ditto.
A Child with Angels -	—	Ditto.
The Virgin and Child (this picture was not quite finished) -	65	Mr. J. Bannister.
The Angel contemplating the Cross; being the upper part of the Nativity - -	—	Bequeathed to the Duke of Portland.
The Four Cardinal Virtues, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude; and Faith, Hope, and Charity: designs for the window of New College, Oxford, painted by Mr. Jervais - -	—	In the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin.
A Bacchante - -	50	Sir W. Hamilton.
Another - -	75	The Earl of Lauderdale.
A Holy Family - -	500	Mr. Macklin, printseller. Afterwards sold to L. Gwydir for 700 guineas.
Tuccia, the Vestal Virgin	300	Mr. Macklin.
The Gleaners (Mrs. Macklin, her Daughter, and Miss Potts) - -	300	Ditto.
St. John - -	150	— Willet, Esq.

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
St. Cecilia (Mrs. Sheridan, and two Daughters of Coote Purdon, Esq.) -	150 gs.	R. B. Sheridan, Esq.
Two Groups, in the manner of Paul Veronese; one containing the portraits of the Duke of Leeds, Lord Dundas, Constantine Lord Mulgrave, Lord Seaforth, the Honourable C. Greville, Charles Crowle, Esq, and the Right Hon. Sir Joseph Banks, Bart.; the other, those of Sir W. Hamilton, Sir W. W. Wynne, Bart., Richard Thompson, Esq., Sir John Taylor, — Payne Galway, Esq., John Smyth, Esq., and Spencer Stanhope, Esq. - -	—	Society of Dilettanti.
A Boy with a portfolio -	50	Earl of Warwick.
A studious Boy - -	—	G. Hardinge, Esq.
A pouting Girl - -	—	Ditto.
The Family of George Duke of Marlborough	700	The Duke of Marlborough.
Circe - - - -	35	Sir C. Bunbury, Bart.
The Children in the Wood	50	Lord Palmerston.
A Girl leaning on a Pedestal - -	75	Ditto.
The Infant Academy -	—	Ditto, by bequest.
Venus - -	—	The Earl of Upper Ossory, by bequest.
Una, from Spenser (Miss Beauclerk) - -	—	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.
King Lear - -	—	Ditto.
Heads of Angels, a study. From a daughter of Lord William Gordon	100	Lord W. Gordon.
Cardinal Beaufort -	500	Mr. Ald. Boydell.
Robert Goodfellow -	100	Ditto.
The Cauldron Scene in Macbeth - -	1000	Ditto.

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
Resignation, from Goldsmith's Deserted Village - - -	—	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.
Venus, and a Boy piping	250 gs.	J. J. Angerstein, Esq.
Mrs. Siddons, in the character of the Tragic Muse - -	700	N. Desenfans, Esq.
A Girl with a cat -	—	Ditto.
A Girl with a bird's nest	—	Ditto.
The Infant Hercules in the cradle (a single figure, painted before the large picture) -	150	Earl Fitzwilliam.
Hercules strangling the serpents - -	1500	Empress of Russia.
Cupid and Psyche -	250	Charles Long, Esq.
Cymon and Iphigenia (this was the last fancy picture painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds) -	—	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.

A List of the Number of Pictures exhibited by Sir Joshua Reynolds; with the Years in which they were exhibited.

The first Exhibition was in 1760, at the Great Room belonging to the Society instituted for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce.

1760 Mr. Reynolds sent 4 pictures.

The following year, viz. 1761, the artists exhibited at the Great Room in Spring Gardens.

1761	Mr. Reynolds sent	5	pictures.	One of them was a portrait of the Rev. Lawrence Sterne, the celebrated author.
1762	—	3	—	One of them, Mr. Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy.
1763	—	4	—	
1764	—	2	—	

1765	Mr. Reynolds sent	2	pictures.	One of them a whole length of Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces.
1766	—	4	—	
1767	—	—	—	
1768	—	1	—	
	And at an Exhibition made for the King of Denmark - -	4	—	
		25		

The Royal Academy having been instituted in 1768, and Mr. Reynolds elected President of the Society, he from that time exhibited at the Royal Academy only.

1769	Mr. Reynolds sent	4	pictures.	
1770	—	8	—	
1771	—	6	—	
1772	—	6	—	
1773	—	12	—	Including whole-length portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.
1774	—	13	—	Including the Duchess of Gloucester and the Princess Sophia; also the Marchioness Townshend and her sisters, Mrs. Gardiner, and Mrs. Beresford, decorating the altar of Hymen; also his first Infant Jupiter.
1775	—	12	—	Including Mrs. Sheridan, as St. Cecilia.
1776	—	12	—	Including Omiah, and Master Crewe as Henry VIII.
1777	—	13	—	Including the "Fortune-teller."
1778	—	4	—	
1779	—	11	—	Including the Nativity. This fine work of art was unfortunately destroyed by fire at Belvoir Castle (the Duke of Rutland's).
1780	—	6	—	
1781	—	8	—	Including the Death of Dido, and portraits of the Three Ladies Waldgrave.

1782	Mr. Reynolds sent 13 pictures.		
1783	—	10 —	
1784	—	14 —	Including the Prince of Wales, and Col. St. Leger; his fine whole length of Mrs. Siddons; and a portrait of the Right Hon. Charles Fox.
1785	—	15 —	
1786	—	12 —	Including a whole-length portrait of the Duke of Orleans.
1787	—	12 —	Including the Prince of Wales, &c.
1788	—	18 —	Including *Hercules;* the picture painted for the Empress Catharine.
1789	—	12 —	Including the Continence of Scipio, Cymon and Iphigenia, Cupid and Psyche, and Robin Goodfellow.
1790	The last year of his exhibiting	17 —	Including Mrs. Billington, the singer, &c.
		228	

Total. — At the Room of the Society of Arts - 4
At the Room in Spring Gardens - 20
At the Royal Academy - - 228

Total 252

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Malone has stated that the collection of pictures by ancient masters, belonging to Sir Joshua Reynolds, was in March, 1795, sold by auction for - - - -	10,319	2	6
And in April, 1796, various historical and fancy pieces of his own painting, together with some unclaimed portraits, for - - -	4,505	18	0
To which may be added, that his collection of drawings and prints was sold by auction in March, 1798, for - - -	1,903	0	0
	£16,728	0	6

We have already pointed out, on former occasions, the nature of the principles by which Sir Joshua was regulated in the course of a long and successful career. He considered the works of the best ancient masters as the most infallible guides for the student; and by these his own practice was uniformly guided, even at the height of his greatest celebrity, when he was himself so well qualified to give instruction to others. If Reynolds, with his limited professional education, was enabled to profit so considerably from the works of the ancients, how much greater progress should reasonably be expected from students of the present generation, who may truly be said to have that instruction placed before them, with every facility of profiting by its advantages, which he was reduced to seek for under circumstances the most discouraging, with no other aid than his own perseverance and industry!

We are firmly convinced that by pursuing the line of study pointed out in Sir Joshua's incomparable Discourses, the student in painting will do more for himself, on the basis of his well-grounded academic education, than any other mode of instruction can secure to him; and that the method of study which he has recommended — the study of the works of the best ancient masters—will be found, in the present advanced state of the arts, when so great a portion of mechanical dexterity and so good a view of nature have already been acquired, to afford the best means, if not indeed the only ones, of directing the painter to those important excellences which nothing but theory can teach, and which are at present nearly all that remain to be acquired.

Sir Joshua has availed himself in his Discourses of much valuable matter on the general principles of art, brought together with great labour, and selected with

much discrimination by the author of an excellent little treatise on painting written nearly two centuries ago; and which would probably have never been practically useful if Reynolds had not forced its contents into notice, and given them the form which they assume in his lectures. The admirable manner in which he has illustrated the principles contained in that interesting volume, which are chiefly derived from Greek and Roman authorities, has given them a value which they would never have possessed in the form in which they were arranged, and a much more extensive circulation than the author of the work could have ever anticipated. The book formed a part of Sir Joshua's collection, and was sold at the sale of his effects. It is now in the possession of Mr. Rothwell, whose talent as an artist is well known to the public, and whose modesty and worth cannot fail to be appreciated by all who have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

So far from detracting from the merit of the Discourses, we think the use which Sir Joshua has made of the contents of the volume alluded to is at once highly creditable to his judgment in distinguishing their merit, to his ability in their selection, illustration, and arrangement, and to the unassuming spirit with which he has adopted the principles which others suggested to him.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in fact, did not disdain to draw instruction from any sources through which it was possible to obtain it. He frequently adopted the suggestions of those who were wholly uninstructed in the principles and unacquainted with the practice of the art; and often derived hints from the observations of children, to which, indeed, he attached a great degree of importance.

"I cannot but think," he has remarked in one of his manuscript fragments, "that Apelles's method of exposing his pictures to the public was a good one. I do not know why the judgment of the vulgar on the mechanical parts of painting should not be as good as any whatever; for instance, as to whether such or such a part be natural or not. If one of those persons should ask why half the face is black, or why there is a spot of black, or snuff, as they will call it, under the nose, I should conclude from thence that the shadows were thick, or dirtily painted, or that the shadow under the nose was too much resembling snuff; when, if those shadows had exactly resembled the transparency and colour of nature, they would have no more been taken notice of than the shadow in nature itself. Yet I have seen painters lift up their eyes at such observations, and, wrapping themselves up in their own conceit, complain of the want of connoissance in the world, in order to value their works as they deserve; never suspecting the fault to be in themselves. At the same time, however," he farther remarks, "a painter should take care not to condescend *too far*, and sacrifice his taste to the judgment of the multitude: few are capable of giving a good judgment in regard to the delicacy of expression."

We shall conclude with the following remarks of Sir Joshua, which were either the result of conversations with his friends, or collected from fragments written by himself; and will serve to show his peculiar habit of observation, and of noting whatever he thought worth retaining:—

"The great principle of being happy in this world is not to be affected with small things.

"No man relishes an evening walk like him whose mind has been employed the whole preceding day.

" Politè behaviour and refined address, like good pictures, make the least show to ordinary eyes.

" Humility is not to despise any thing, especially mankind.

" Magnanimity is not to be disturbed by any thing.

" A man is a pedant, who, having been brought up among books, is able to talk of nothing else. The same of a soldier, lawyer, painter, &c.

" Natural is that which is according to the common course of things; consequently, an ugly face is unnatural.

" The character of a nation is, perhaps, more strongly marked by their taste in painting than in any other pursuit, although more considerable; as you may easier find which way the wind sits, by throwing up a straw in the air than any heavier substance.

" Rules are very necessary to, but will never make, a painter. They should be used as servants, and subject to us, not we to them.

" In painting, prefer truth to freedom of hand.

" Grandeur is composed of straight lines. Genteelness and elegance, of serpentinè lines.

" A firm and determined manner is grand, but not elegant.

" Genteelness is not being crowded, especially if there is fulness at the same time.

" Air is a single moment of action. Simplicity is an exact medium between too little and too much. Grace is the medium of motion; beauty is the medium of form; and genteelness is the medium of fashion.

" Ornament is the medium between wanting what is necessary and being over furnished; ornament ought to arise only from the right ordering of things. *Orno* is the Latin for *to furnish.*

"Manner in painting is like peculiarity of behaviour; though it may please a few, the bulk of mankind will condemn it.

"The only wages a real genius thinks of in his labour is the praise of impartial judges.

"A good portrait painter may not be capable of painting history, but a good historical painter, for certain, has the ability to paint portraits."

DETAILED ACCOUNT

OF

THE FUNERAL CEREMONY.

The following account of the ceremonial was written by a friend the day after the funeral, and published in several of the newspapers.

"On Saturday last, at half an hour after three o'clock, was interred the body of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt., Doctor of Laws in the Universities of Oxford and Dublin, principal painter to his Majesty, President of the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

"He was interred in the vast crypt of the cathedral church of St. Paul, next to the body of Dr. Newton, late Bishop of Bristol, himself an eminent critic in poetry and painting, and close by the tomb of the

famous Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of that great edifice.

"The body was conveyed on the preceding night to the Royal Academy, according to the express orders of his Majesty, by a condescension highly honourable to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and gratifying to the wishes of that Society of eminent artists. It lay that night, and until the beginning of the funeral procession, in state, in the model-room of the Academy.

"The company who attended the funeral assembled in the library and council-chamber; the Royal Academy in the exhibition-room.

"The company consisted of a great number of the most distinguished persons, who were emulous in their desire of paying the last honours to the remains of him, whose life had been distinguished by the exertions of the highest talents, and the exercise of every virtue that can make a man respected and beloved. Many more were prevented by illness, and unexpected and unavoidable occasions, which they much regretted, from attending.

"Never was a public solemnity conducted with more order, decorum, and dignity. The procession set out at half an hour after twelve o'clock. The hearse arrived at the great western gate of St. Paul's about a quarter after two, and was there met by the dignitaries of the church, and by the gentlemen of the choir, who chanted the proper psalms, whilst the procession moved to the entrance of the choir, where was performed, in a superior manner, the full-choir evening service, together with the famous anthem of Dr. Boyce; the body remaining during the whole time in the centre of the choir.

"The chief mourner and gentlemen of the Academy, as of the family, were placed by the body: the

chief mourner in a chair at the head; the two attendants at the feet; the pall-bearers and executors in the seats on the decanal side; the other noblemen and gentlemen on the cantorial side. The Bishop of London was in his proper place, as were the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.

"After the service, the body was conveyed into the crypt, and placed immediately beneath the perforated brass plate, under the centre of the dome. Dr. Jefferies, Canon Residentiary, with the other Canons, and the whole choir, came under the dome; the grave-digger attending in the middle with a shovel of mould, which at the proper time was thrown through the aperture of the plate, on the coffin. The funeral service was chanted, and accompanied on the organ in a grand and affecting manner. When the funeral service was ended, the chief mourners and executors went into the crypt, and attended the corpse to the grave, which was dug under the pavement.

"The order of the procession was as follows:—

The Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and City Marshals.
The undertaker and ten conductors, on horseback.
A lid with plumes of feathers.
The HEARSE with six horses.
Ten pall-bearers; viz.
The Duke of Dorset, Lord High Steward of his Majesty's household.
Duke of Leeds.
Duke of Portland.
Marquis Townshend.
Marquis of Abercorn.
Earl of Carlisle.
Earl of Inchiquin.
Earl of Upper Ossory.
Lord Viscount Palmerston.
Lord Eliot.
Robert Lovel Gwatkin, Esq. Chief Mourner.
Two attendants of the family.
The Right Hon. Edmund Burke,
Edmond Malone, Esq.
Philip Metcalfe, Esq. } Executors.

The Royal Academicians and Students.
Bennet Langton, Esq. (Professor in Ancient Literature.)
James Boswell, Esq. (Secretary for Foreign Correspondence.)

The Archbishop of York.
Earl of Fife.
Lord St. Asaph.
Lord Fortescue.
Lord Lucan.
Right Hon. W. Windham.
Sir George Beaumont, Bart.
Sir Charles Bunbury, Bart.
Dr. George Fordyce.
Dr. Brocklesby.
Sir William Scott, M.P.
John Rolle, Esq. M.P.
Reginald Pole Carew, Esq. M.P.
Mat. Montagu, Esq. M.P.
Dudley North, Esq. M.P.
Abel Moysey, Esq.
John Thomas Batt, Esq.
Colonel Gwynn.
Dr. Lawrence.
James Martin, Esq.
Edward Jerningham, Esq.
Richard Burke, Esq.
John Julius Angerstein, Esq.
Charles Burney, Esq.
William Cruikshank, Esq.
John Philip Kemble, Esq.
Mr. Alderman Boydell.
Mr. Poggi.

The Marquis of Buckingham.
Earl of Carysfort.
Lord Bishop of London.
Lord Somers.
The Dean of Norwich.
Sir Abraham Hume, Bart.
Sir Thomas Dundas, Bart.
Sir William Forbes, Bart.
Dr. Ash.
Dr. Blagden.
George Rose, Esq. M.P.
William Weddell, Esq. M.P.
Richard Clarke, Esq.
Richard P. Knight, Esq. M.P.
Charles Townley, Esq.
John Cleveland, Esq. M.P.
Welbore Ellis Agar, Esq.
Captain Pole.
William Seward, Esq.
—— Drewe, Esq.
William Vachel, Esq.
Thomas Coutts, Esq.
Edward Gwatkin, Esq.
John Hunter, Esq.
—— Home, Esq.
Joseph Hickey, Esq.
John Devaynes, Esq.
Mr. Breda.

ADDENDA.

PORTRAITS OF SIR JOSHUA.

We have already mentioned, in the body of the Memoir, when speaking of the periods at which they were painted, the greater number of the portraits still existing of Sir Joshua; but as it may be convenient, for the purpose of reference, to have a list of them collectively annexed to the work, we subjoin the following notice, extracted from Malone, of all the portraits which were painted of Sir Joshua Reynolds, including those which were executed by others among the pictures which he painted of himself: —

"The last portrait which Sir Joshua painted of himself, (with spectacles,) 1788, is extremely like him, and exhibits him exactly as he appeared in his latter days, in domestic life. It is a three-quarter picture, in the collection of the Earl of Inchiquin, and his Grace the Duke of Leeds has a duplicate of it. There is a portrait of him, by himself, in the dining room of the Society of Dilettanti in Pall Mall, a three-quarter also: he is dressed in a loose robe, and has his own hair. Another (in which he holds his hand to his ear, to aid the sound), painted for Mr. Thrale, about 1775, is in the possession of Mrs. Piozzi. Another (a half-length) is in the council room of the Royal Academy, with the cap and gown of a doctor of civil law; which honour he received from the university of Oxford, July 9. 1773: in this picture he has introduced the bust of Michael Angelo. Another, in the same dress, a three-quarter, was in Belvoir Castle; and a third, in the same dress, in the gallery of the grand duke, at Florence. Another portrait of him is preserved at the town-hall at Plympton, also painted and presented by himself; in this picture a red gown is thrown carelessly about him, and he is without a cap. One nearly resembling this, and painted before it, is at Taplow Court. We have another portrait of our author in the dress of a shepherd, with Mr. Jervais,

the glass-painter, in one of the pictures painted as designs for the great window of New College at Oxford; and Mr. Farington, R.A., has a portrait of him, by himself, as a painter, with a canvass, easel, &c. before him. Another portrait of him, by himself, is in the possession of Robert Lovel Gwatkin, Esq. of Killiow, in Cornwall. Lord Inchiquin has two portraits of our author, when young: one, when he was about thirty years old, in his own hair; the other younger, in the manner of Rembrandt, in his own hair also, with his great coat and hat on. Another youthful portrait done before he went to Italy, is said to be in the possession of Thomas Lane, Esq. of Cofflent, in Devonshire.

"There is also a portrait of him painted by American Stuart, about the year 1784, and formerly in the possession of Alderman Boydell: another by Zoffany, in a picture representing all the artists of the Academy about the year 1770, in the King's Collection: and not long before his death, when he was much indisposed, he sat to Mr. Breda, a Swedish painter.

"Soon after Gainsborough settled in London, Sir Joshua thought himself bound in civility to pay him a visit. That painter, however, as our author told me, took not the least notice of him for several years; but at length called upon him and requested him to sit for his picture. Sir Joshua complied, and sat once, but being soon afterwards taken ill, he was obliged to go to Bath for his health. On his return to London, perfectly restored, he sent Gainsborough word that he was returned; to which Gainsborough, who was extremely capricious, only replied that he was glad to hear that Sir Joshua Reynolds was well; and he never afterwards desired Sir Joshua to sit, nor had he any other intercourse with him till a short time before his (Gainsborough's) death, when he sent to request to see Sir Joshua, and thanked him for the very liberal and favourable manner in which he had always spoken of his works, — a circumstance which our author has thought worth recording in his Fourteenth Discourse."

"A marble bust of Sir Joshua Reynolds, by Cirachi, an Italian sculptor, is in the possession of the Earl of Inchiquin; and another bust, modelled from the life in terra cotta, more like than the marble bust which was done from it, was sold by auction by Greenwood, in 1792. I have a medallion," continues Malone, "modelled in wax by Mountstephen, which is a very faithful representation of this great painter in his usual evening dress. It was done in 1790, when he was in his sixty-seventh year."

DISCOURSES.

TO

THE KING.

THE regular progress of cultivated life is from necessaries to accommodations, from accommodations to ornaments. By your illustrious predecessors were established Marts for manufactures, and Colleges for science: but for the arts of elegance, those arts by which manufactures are embellished, and science is refined, to found an Academy was reserved for Your Majesty.

Had such patronage been without effect, there had been reason to believe that Nature had, by some insurmountable impediment, obstructed our proficiency; but the annual improvement of the Exhibitions which Your Majesty has been pleased to encourage, shows that only encouragement had been wanting.

To give advice to those who are contending for royal liberality, has been for some years the duty of my station in the Academy; and these Discourses hope for Your Majesty's acceptance, as well-intended endeavours to incite that emulation which your notice has kindled, and direct those studies which your bounty has rewarded.

May it please Your MAJESTY,

Your MAJESTY'S

Most dutiful Servant,

And most faithful Subject,

[1778.] JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

TO

THE MEMBERS

OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

GENTLEMEN,

THAT you have ordered the publication of this discourse, is not only very flattering to me, as it implies your approbation of the method of study which I have recommended; but likewise, as this method receives from that act such an additional weight and authority, as demands from the Students that deference and respect, which can be due only to the united sense of so considerable a BODY of ARTISTS.

I am,

With the greatest esteem and respect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble,

And obedient Servant,

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

DISCOURSE I.

Delivered at the Opening of the Royal Academy, January 2. 1769.

THE ADVANTAGES PROCEEDING FROM THE INSTITUTION OF A ROYAL ACADEMY. — HINTS OFFERED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PROFESSORS AND VISITERS. — THAT AN IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO THE RULES OF ART BE EXACTED FROM THE YOUNG STUDENTS. — THAT A PREMATURE DISPOSITION TO A MASTERLY DEXTERITY BE REPRESSED. — THAT DILIGENCE BE CONSTANTLY RECOMMENDED, AND (THAT IT MAY BE EFFECTUAL) DIRECTED TO ITS PROPER OBJECT.

GENTLEMEN,

AN Academy, in which the Polite Arts may be regularly cultivated, is at last opened among us by Royal Munificence. This must appear an event in the highest degree interesting, not only to the Artist, but to the whole nation.

It is indeed difficult to give any other reason, why an empire like that of BRITAIN should so long have wanted an ornament so suitable to its greatness, than that slow progression of things, which naturally makes elegance and refinement the last effect of opulence and power.

An Institution like this has often been recommended upon considerations merely mercantile; but an Academy, founded upon such principles, can never effect even its own narrow purposes. If it has an origin no higher, no taste can ever be formed in manufactures; but if the higher Arts of Design flourish, these inferior ends will be answered of course.

We are happy in having a Prince, who has conceived

the design of such an Institution, according to its true dignity; and who promotes the Arts, as the head of a great, a learned, a polite, and a commercial nation; and I can now congratulate you, Gentlemen, on the accomplishment of your long and ardent wishes.

The numberless and ineffectual consultations which I have had with many in this assembly to form plans and concert schemes for an Academy, afford a sufficient proof of the impossibility of succeeding but by the influence of MAJESTY. But there have, perhaps, been times, when even the influence of MAJESTY would have been ineffectual; and it is pleasing to reflect, that we are thus embodied, when every circumstance seems to concur from which honour and prosperity can probably arise.

There are, at this time, a greater number of excellent artists than were ever known before at one period in this nation; there is a general desire among our Nobility to be distinguished as lovers and judges of the Arts; there is a greater superfluity of wealth among the people to reward the professors; and, above all, we are patronised by a Monarch, who, knowing the value of science and of elegance, thinks every art worthy of his notice, that tends to soften and humanise the mind.

After so much has been done by HIS MAJESTY, it will be wholly our fault, if our progress is not in some degree correspondent to the wisdom and generosity of the Institution: let us show our gratitude in our diligence, that, though our merit may not answer his expectations, yet, at least, our industry may deserve his protection.

But whatever may be our proportion of success, of this we may be sure, that the present Institution will at least contribute to advance our knowledge of the

Arts, and bring us nearer to that ideal excellence, which it is the lot of genius always to contemplate, and never to attain.

The principal advantage of an Academy is, that, besides furnishing able men to direct the Student, it will be a repository for the great examples of the Art. These are the materials on which Genius is to work, and without which the strongest intellect may be fruitlessly or deviously employed. By studying these authentic models, that idea of excellence which is the result of the accumulated experience of past ages may be at once acquired; and the tardy and obstructed progress of our predecessors may teach us a shorter and easier way. The Student receives, at one glance, the principles which many Artists have spent their whole lives in ascertaining; and, satisfied with their effect, is spared the painful investigation by which they came to be known and fixed. How many men of great natural abilities have been lost to this nation, for want of these advantages! They never had an opportunity of seeing those masterly efforts of genius, which at once kindle the whole soul, and force it into sudden and irresistible approbation.

Raffaelle, it is true, had not the advantage of studying in an Academy; but all Rome, and the works of Michel Angelo in particular, were to him an Academy. On the sight of the Capella Sistina, he immediately, from a dry, Gothic, and even insipid manner, which attends to the minute accidental discriminations of particular and individual objects, assumed that grand style of painting, which improves partial representation by the general and invariable ideas of nature.

Every seminary of learning may be said to be surrounded with an atmosphere of floating knowledge, where every mind may imbibe somewhat congenial to

its own original conceptions. Knowledge, thus obtained, has always something more popular and useful than that which is forced upon the mind by private precepts, or solitary meditation. Besides, it is generally found, that a youth more easily receives instruction from the companions of his studies, whose minds are nearly on a level with his own, than from those who are much his superiors; and it is from his equals only that he catches the fire of emulation.

One advantage, I will venture to affirm, we shall have in our Academy, which no other nation can boast. We shall have nothing to unlearn. To this praise the present race of Artists have a just claim. As far as they have yet proceeded, they are right. With us the exertions of genius will henceforward be directed to their proper objects. It will not be as it has been in other schools, where he that travelled fastest only wandered farthest from the right way.

Impressed, as I am, therefore, with such a favourable opinion of my associates in this undertaking, it would ill become me to dictate to any of them. But as these Institutions have so often failed in other nations; and as it is natural to think with regret, how much might have been done, I must take leave to offer a few hints, by which those errors may be rectified, and those defects supplied. These the Professors and Visiters may reject or adopt as they shall think proper.

I would chiefly recommend, that an implicit obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as established by the practice of the great MASTERS, should be exacted from the *young* Students. That those models, which have passed through the approbation of ages, should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guides; as subjects for their imitation, not their criticism.

I am confident, that this is the only efficacious me-

thod of making a progress in the Arts; and that he who sets out with doubting, will find life finished before he becomes master of the rudiments. For it may be laid down as a maxim, that he who begins by presuming on his own sense, has ended his studies as soon as he has commenced them. Every opportunity, therefore, should be taken to discountenance that false and vulgar opinion, that rules are the fetters of genius: they are fetters only to men of no genius; as that armour, which upon the strong is an ornament and a defence, upon the weak and mis-shapen becomes a load, and cripples the body which it was made to protect.

How much liberty may be taken to break through those rules, and, as the poet expresses it,

To snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,

may be a subsequent consideration, when the pupils become masters themselves. It is then, when their genius has received its utmost improvement, that rules may possibly be dispensed with. But let us not destroy the scaffold, until we have raised the building.

The Directors ought more particularly to watch over the genius of those Students, who, being more advanced, are arrived at that critical period of study, on the nice management of which their future turn of taste depends. At that age it is natural for them to be more captivated with what is brilliant than with what is solid, and to prefer splendid negligence to painful and humiliating exactness.

A facility in composing, a lively, and what is called a masterly, handling of the chalk or pencil, are, it must be confessed, captivating qualities to young minds, and become of course the objects of their ambition. They endeavour to imitate these dazzling ex-

cellencies, which they will find no great labour in attaining. After much time spent in these frivolous pursuits, the difficulty will be to retreat; but it will be then too late; and there is scarce an instance of return to scrupulous labour, after the mind has been debauched and deceived by this fallacious mastery.

By this useless industry they are excluded from all power of advancing in real excellence. Whilst boys, they are arrived at their utmost perfection: they have taken the shadow for the substance; and make the mechanical felicity the chief excellence of the art, which is only an ornament, and of the merit of which few but painters themselves are judges.

This seems to me to be one of the most dangerous sources of corruption; and I speak of it from experience, not as an error which may possibly happen, but which has actually infected all foreign Academies. The directors were probably pleased with this premature dexterity in their pupils, and praised their despatch at the expense of their correctness.

But young men have not only this frivolous ambition of being thought masters of execution, inciting them on one hand, but also their natural sloth tempting them on the other. They are terrified at the prospect before them of the toil required to attain exactness. The impetuosity of youth is disgusted at the slow approaches of a regular siege, and desires, from mere impatience of labour, to take the citadel by storm. They wish to find some shorter path to excellence, and hope to obtain the reward of eminence by other means than those, which the indispensable rules of art have prescribed. They must, therefore, be told again and again, that labour is the only price of solid fame, and that whatever their force of genius may be, there is no easy method of becoming a good Painter.

When we read the lives of the most eminent Painters, every page informs us, that no part of their time was spent in dissipation. Even an increase of fame served only to augment their industry. To be convinced with what persevering assiduity they pursued their studies, we need only reflect on their method of proceeding in their most celebrated works. When they conceived a subject, they first made a variety of sketches; then a finished drawing of the whole; after that a more correct drawing of every separate part, — heads, hands, feet, and pieces of drapery; they then painted the picture, and after all retouched it from the life. The pictures, thus wrought with such pains, now appear like the effect of enchantment, and as if some mighty genius had struck them off at a blow.

But, whilst diligence is thus recommended to the Students, the Visiters will take care that their diligence be effectual; that it be well directed, and employed on the proper object. A Student is not always advancing because he is employed; he must apply his strength to that part of the art where the real difficulties lie; to that part which distinguishes it as a liberal art; and not by mistaken industry lose his time in that which is merely ornamental. The Students, instead of vying with each other which shall have the readiest hand, should be taught to contend who shall have the purest and most correct outline; instead of striving which shall produce the brightest tint, or curiously trifling, shall give the gloss of stuffs, so as to appear real, let their ambition be directed to contend, which shall dispose his drapery in the most graceful folds, which shall give the most grace and dignity to the human figure.

I must beg leave to submit one thing more to the

consideration of the Visiters, which appears to me a matter of very great consequence, and the omission of which I think a principal defect in the method of education pursued in all the Academies I have ever visited. The error I mean is, that the Students never draw exactly from the living models which they have before them. It is not, indeed, their intention, nor are they directed to do it. Their drawings resemble the model only in the attitude. They change the form according to their vague and uncertain ideas of beauty, and make a drawing rather of what they think the figure ought to be, than of what it appears. I have thought this the obstacle that has stopped the progress of many young men of real genius; and I very much doubt whether a habit of drawing correctly what we see will not give a proportionable power of drawing correctly what we imagine. He who endeavours to copy nicely the figure before him, not only acquires a habit of exactness and precision, but is continually advancing in his knowledge of the human figure; and though he seems to superficial observers to make a slower progress, he will be found at last capable of adding (without running into capricious wildness) that grace and beauty which is necessary to be given to his more finished works, and which cannot be got by the moderns, as it was not acquired by the ancients, but by an attentive and well compared study of the human form.

What I think ought to enforce this method is, that it has been the practice (as may be seen by their drawings) of the great Masters in the Art. I will mention a drawing of Raffaelle, *The Dispute of the Sacrament*, the print of which, by Count Cailus, is in every hand. It appears that he made his sketch from one model; and the habit he had of drawing exactly from the form before him appears by his making all the figures with

the same cap, such as his model then happened to wear; so servile a copyist was this great man, even at a time when he was allowed to be at his highest pitch of excellence.

I have seen also Academy figures by Annibale Caracci, though he was often sufficiently licentious in his finished works, drawn with all the peculiarities of an individual model.

This scrupulous exactness is so contrary to the practice of the Academies, that it is not without great deference, that I beg leave to recommend it to the consideration of the Visiters; and submit to them, whether the neglect of this method is not one of the reasons why Students so often disappoint expectation, and, being more than boys at sixteen, become less than men at thirty.

In short, the method I recommend can only be detrimental where there are but few living forms to copy; for then Students, by always drawing from one alone, will by habit be taught to overlook defects, and mistake deformity for beauty. But of this there is no danger; since the Council has determined to supply the Academy with a variety of subjects; and indeed those laws which they have drawn up, and which the Secretary will presently read for your confirmation, have in some measure precluded me from saying more upon this occasion. Instead, therefore, of offering my advice, permit me to indulge my wishes, and express my hope, that this Institution may answer the expectation of its ROYAL FOUNDER; that the present age may vie in Arts with that of LEO the Tenth; and that *the dignity of the dying Art* (to make use of an expression of Pliny) may be revived under the Reign of GEORGE THE THIRD.

DISCOURSE II.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 11. 1769.

THE COURSE AND ORDER OF STUDY. — THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF ART. — MUCH COPYING DISCOUNTENANCED. — THE ARTIST AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL PLACES SHOULD BE EMPLOYED IN LAYING UP MATERIALS FOR THE EXERCISE OF HIS ART.

GENTLEMEN,

I CONGRATULATE you on the honour which you have just received. I have the highest opinion of your merits, and could wish to show my sense of them in something which possibly may be more useful to you than barren praise. I could wish to lead you into such a course of study as may render your future progress answerable to your past improvement; and, whilst I applaud you for what has been done, remind you how much yet remains to attain perfection.

I flatter myself, that from the long experience I have had, and the unceasing assiduity with which I have pursued those studies, in which, like you, I have been engaged, I shall be acquitted of vanity in offering some hints to your consideration. They are, indeed, in a great degree, founded upon my own mistakes in the same pursuit. But the history of errors, properly managed, often shortens the road to truth. And although no method of study, that I can offer, will of itself conduct to excellence, yet it may preserve industry from being misapplied.

In speaking to you of the Theory of the Art, I shall

only consider it as it has a relation to the *method* of your studies.

Dividing the study of painting into three distinct periods, I shall address you as having passed through the first of them, which is confined to the rudiments; including a facility of drawing any object that presents itself, a tolerable readiness in the management of colours, and an acquaintance with the most simple and obvious rules of composition.

This first degree of proficiency is, in painting, what grammar is in literature, a general preparation for whatever species of the art the student may afterwards choose for his more particular application. The power of drawing, modelling, and using colours, is very properly called the Language of the Art; and in this language, the honours you have just received prove you to have made no inconsiderable progress.

When the Artist is once enabled to express himself with some degree of correctness, he must then endeavour to collect subjects for expression; to amass a stock of ideas, to be combined and varied as occasion may require. He is now in the second period of study, in which his business is to learn all that has been known and done before his own time. Having hitherto received instructions from a particular master, he is now to consider the Art itself as his master. He must extend his capacity to more sublime and general instructions. Those perfections which lie scattered among various masters are now united in one general idea, which is henceforth to regulate his taste, and enlarge his imagination. With a variety of models thus before him, he will avoid that narrowness and poverty of conception which attends a bigoted admiration of a single master, and will cease to follow any favourite where he ceases to excel. This period

is, however, still a time of subjection and discipline Though the Student will not resign himself blindly to any single authority, when he may have the advantage of consulting many, he must still be afraid of trusting his own judgment, and of deviating into any track where he cannot find the footsteps of some former master.

The third and last period emancipates the Student from subjection to any authority, but what he shall himself judge to be supported by reason. Confiding now in his own judgment, he will consider and separate those different principles to which different modes of beauty owe their original. In the former period he sought only to know and combine excellence, wherever it was to be found, into one idea of perfection. in this he learns, what requires the most attentive survey, and the most subtle disquisition, to discriminate perfections that are incompatible with each other.

He is from this time to regard himself as holding the same rank with those masters whom he before obeyed as teachers; and as exercising a sort of sovereignty over those rules which have hitherto restrained him. Comparing now no longer the performances of Art with each other, but examining the Art itself by the standard of nature, he corrects what is erroneous, supplies what is scanty, and adds by his own observation what the industry of his predecessors may have yet left wanting to perfection. Having well established his judgment, and stored his memory, he may now without fear try the power of his imagination. The mind that has been thus disciplined may be indulged in the warmest enthusiasm, and venture to play on the borders of the wildest extravagance. The habitual dignity which long converse with the greatest minds has imparted to him will display itself in all his

attempts; and he will stand among his instructors, not as an imitator, but a rival.

These are the different stages of the Art. But as I now address myself particularly to those Students who have been this day rewarded for their happy passage through the first period, I can with no propriety suppose they want any help in the initiatory studies. My present design is to direct your view to distant excellence, and to show you the readiest path that leads to it. Of this I shall speak with such latitude, as may leave the province of the professor uninvaded; and shall not anticipate those precepts, which it is his business to give, and your duty to understand.

It is indisputably evident that a great part of every man's life must be employed in collecting materials for the exercise of genius. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory: nothing can come of nothing: he who has laid up no materials can produce no combinations.

A Student unacquainted with the attempts of former adventurers is always apt to over-rate his own abilities; to mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment, and every coast new to him for a new-found country. If by chance he passes beyond his usual limits, he congratulates his own arrival at those regions which they who have steered a better course have long left behind them.

The productions of such minds are seldom distinguished by an air of originality: they are anticipated in their happiest efforts; and if they are found to differ in any thing from their predecessors, it is only in irregular sallies and trifling conceits. The more exten-

sive, therefore, your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your powers of invention; and what may appear still more like a paradox, the more original will be your conceptions. But the difficulty on this occasion is to determine what ought to be proposed as models of excellence, and who ought to be considered as the properest guides.

To a young man just arrived in Italy, many of the present painters of that country are ready enough to obtrude their precepts, and to offer their own performances as examples of that perfection which they affect to recommend. The modern, however, who recommends himself as a standard, may justly be suspected as ignorant of the true end, and unacquainted with the proper object, of the art which he professes. To follow such a guide will not only retard the Student, but mislead him.

On whom, then, can he rely, or who shall show him the path that leads to excellence? The answer is obvious: those great masters who have travelled the same road with success are the most likely to conduct others. The works of those who have stood the test of ages have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend. The duration and stability of their fame is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but bound to the human heart by every tie of sympathetic approbation.

There is no danger of studying too much the works of those great men; but how they may be studied to advantage is an enquiry of great importance.

Some who have never raised their minds to the consideration of the real dignity of the Art, and who rate the works of an Artist in proportion as they excel

or are defective in the mechanical parts, look on theory as something that may enable them to talk but not to paint better; and, confining themselves entirely to mechanical practice, very assiduously toil on in the drudgery of copying, and think they make a rapid progress while they faithfully exhibit the minutest part of a favourite picture. This appears to me a very tedious, and, I think, a very erroneous, method of proceeding. Of every large composition, even of those which are most admired, a great part may be truly said to be *common-place*. This, though it takes up much time in copying, conduces little to improvement. I consider general copying as a delusive kind of industry: the Student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object; as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work: and those powers of invention and composition which ought particularly to be called out, and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise.

How incapable those are of producing any thing of their own, who have spent much of their time in making finished copies, is well known to all who are conversant with our art.

To suppose that the complication of powers, and variety of ideas necessary to that mind which aspires to the first honours in the Art of Painting, can be obtained by the frigid contemplation of a few single models, is no less absurd, than it would be in him who wishes to be a poet, to imagine that by translating a tragedy he can acquire to himself sufficient knowledge of the appearances of nature, the operations of the passions, and the incidents of life.

The great use in copying, if it be at all useful,

should seem to be in learning to colour; yet even colouring will never be perfectly attained by servilely copying the model before you. An eye critically nice can only be formed by observing well-coloured pictures with attention; and by close inspection, and minute examination, you will discover, at last, the manner of handling, the artifices of contrast, glazing, and other expedients by which good colourists have raised the value of their tints, and by which nature has been so happily imitated.

I must inform you, however, that old pictures, deservedly celebrated for their colouring, are often so changed by dirt and varnish that we ought not to wonder if they do not appear equal to their reputation in the eyes of unexperienced painters, or young Students. An artist whose judgment is matured by long observation considers rather what the picture once was, than what it is at present. He has by habit acquired a power of seeing the brilliancy of tints through the cloud by which it is obscured. An exact imitation, therefore, of those pictures, is likely to fill the Student's mind with false opinions, and to send him back a colourist of his own formation, with ideas equally remote from nature and from art, from the genuine practice of the masters and the real appearances of things.

Following these rules, and using these precautions, when you have clearly and distinctly learned in what good colouring consists, you cannot do better than have recourse to nature herself, who is always at hand, and in comparison of whose true splendour the best coloured pictures are but faint and feeble.

However, as the practice of copying is not entirely to be excluded, since the mechanical practice of painting is learned in some measure by it, let those choice parts only be selected which have recommended

the work to notice. If its excellence consists in its general effect, it would be proper to make slight sketches of the machinery and general management of the picture. Those sketches should be kept always by you for the regulation of your style. Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions. Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit. Consider with yourself how a Michael Angelo or a Raffaelle would have treated this subject; and work yourself into a belief that your picture is to be seen and criticised by them when completed. Even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers.

But as mere enthusiasm will carry you but a little way, let me recommend a practice that may be equivalent to and will perhaps more efficaciously contribute to your advancement, than even the verbal corrections of those masters themselves, could they be obtained. What I would propose is, that you should enter into a kind of competition, by painting a similar subject, and making a companion to any picture that you consider as a model. After you have finished your work, place it near the model, and compare them carefully together. You will then not only see but feel your own deficiencies more sensibly than by precepts, or any other means of instruction. The true principles of painting will mingle with your thoughts. Ideas thus fixed by sensible objects will be certain and definitive; and, sinking deep into the mind, will not only be more just but more lasting than those presented to you by precepts only, which will always be fleeting, variable, and undetermined.

This method of comparing your own efforts with

those of some great master is indeed a severe and mortifying task, to which none will submit but such as have great views, with fortitude sufficient to forego the gratifications of present vanity for future honour. When the Student has succeeded in some measure to his own satisfaction, and has felicitated himself on his success, to go voluntarily to a tribunal where he knows his vanity must be humbled, and all self-approbation must vanish, requires not only great resolution but great humility. To him, however, who has the ambition to be a real master, the solid satisfaction which proceeds from a consciousness of his advancement (of which seeing his own faults is the first step) will very abundantly compensate for the mortification of present disappointment. There is, besides, this alleviating circumstance: every discovery he makes, every acquisition of knowledge he attains, seems to proceed from his own sagacity; and thus he acquires a confidence in himself sufficient to keep up the resolution of perseverance.

We all must have experienced how lazily, and, consequently, how ineffectually, instruction is received when forced upon the mind by others. Few have been taught to any purpose who have not been their own teachers. We prefer those instructions which we have given ourselves, from our affection to the instructor; and they are more effectual, from being received into the mind at the very time when it is most open and eager to receive them.

With respect to the pictures that you are to choose for your models, I could wish that you would take the world's opinion rather than your own. In other words, I would have you choose those of established reputation rather than follow your own fancy. If you should not admire them at first, you will, by endea-

vouring to imitate them, find that the world has not been mistaken.

It is not an easy task to point out those various excellencies for your imitation which lie distributed amongst the various schools. An endeavour to do this may, perhaps, be the subject of some future discourse. I will, therefore, at present only recommend a model for style in Painting, which is a branch of the art more immediately necessary to the young Student. Style in painting is the same as in writing, a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions or sentiments are conveyed. And in this Ludovico Caracci (I mean in his best works) appears to me to approach the nearest to perfection. His unaffected breadth of light and shadow, the simplicity of colouring, which, holding its proper rank, does not draw aside the least part of the attention from the subject, and the solemn effect of that twilight which seems diffused over his pictures, appear to me to correspond with grave and dignified subjects, better than the more artificial brilliancy of sunshine which enlightens the pictures of Titian: though Tintoret thought that Titian's colouring was the model of perfection, and would correspond even with the sublime of Michael Angelo; and that if Angelo had coloured like Titian, or Titian designed like Angelo, the world would once have had a perfect painter.

It is our misfortune, however, that those works of Caracci, which I would recommend to the Student, are not often found out of Bologna. The *St. Francis in the Midst of his Friars, The Transfiguration, The Birth of St. John the Baptist, The Calling of St. Matthew,* the *St. Jerome, The Fresco Paintings* in the Zampieri palace, are all worthy the attention of the Student. And I think those who travel would do well to allot

a much greater portion of their time to that city than it has been hitherto the custom to bestow.

In this art, as in others, there are many teachers who profess to show the nearest way to excellence; and many expedients have been invented by which the toil of study might be saved. But let no man be seduced to idleness by specious promises. Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labour. It argues, indeed, no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving those advances; which, like the hand of a clock, whilst they make hourly approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation. A facility of drawing, like that of playing upon a musical instrument, cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts. I need not, therefore, enforce by many words the necessity of continual application; nor tell you that the port-crayon ought to be for ever in your hands. Various methods will occur to you by which this power may be acquired. I would particularly recommend, that after your return from the Academy (where I suppose your attendance to be constant), you would endeavour to draw the figure by memory. I will even venture to add, that by perseverance in this custom you will become able to draw the human figure tolerably correct, with as little effort of the mind as is required to trace with a pen the letters of the alphabet.

That this facility is not unattainable some members in this Academy give a sufficient proof. And be assured, that, if this power is not acquired whilst you are young, there will be no time for it afterwards; at least the attempt will be attended with as much difficulty as those experience who learn to read or write after they have arrived to the age of maturity.

But while I mention the port-crayon as the Student's constant companion, he must still remember, that the pencil is the instrument by which he must hope to obtain eminence. What, therefore, I wish to impress upon you is, that, whenever an opportunity offers, you paint your studies instead of drawing them. This will give you such a facility in using colours, that in time they will arrange themselves under the pencil, even without the attention of the hand that conducts it. If one act excluded the other, this advice could not with any propriety be given. But if Painting comprises both drawing and colouring, and if by a short struggle of resolute industry, the same expedition is attainable in painting as in drawing on paper, I cannot see what objection can justly be made to the practice, or why that should be done by parts which may be done all together.

If we turn our eyes to the several Schools of Painting, and consider their respective excellences, we shall find that those who excel most in colouring pursued this method. The Venetian and Flemish schools, which owe much of their fame to colouring, have enriched the cabinets of the collectors of drawings with very few examples. Those of Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and the Bassans, are in general slight and undetermined. Their sketches on paper are as rude as their pictures are excellent in regard to harmony of colouring. Correggio and Baroccio have left few, if any, finished drawings behind them. And in the Flemish school, Rubens and Vandyck made their designs for the most part either in colours or in chiaro-oscuro. It is as common to find studies of the Venetian and Flemish Painters on canvass as of the schools of Rome and Florence on paper. Not but that many finished drawings are sold under the names of those

masters. Those, however, are undoubtedly the productions either of engravers or their scholars, who copied their works.

These instructions I have ventured to offer from my own experience; but as they deviate widely from received opinions, I offer them with diffidence, and when better are suggested shall retract them without regret.

There is one precept, however, in which I shall only be opposed by the vain, the ignorant, and the idle. I am not afraid that I shall repeat it too often. You must have no dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, industry will improve them: if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency. Nothing is denied to well-directed labour. nothing is to be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature or essence of genius, I will venture to assert, that assiduity unabated by difficulty, and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of its pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of *natural powers*.

Though a man cannot at all times, and in all places, paint or draw, yet the mind can prepare itself by laying in proper materials, at all times, and in all places. Both Livy and Plutarch, in describing Philopœmen, one of the ablest generals of antiquity, have given us a striking picture of a mind always intent on its profession, and by assiduity obtaining those excellences which some all their lives vainly expect from nature. I shall quote the passage in Livy at length, as it runs parallel with the practice I would recommend to the Painter, Sculptor, and Architect.

"Philopœmen was a man eminent for his sagacity and experience in choosing ground, and in leading armies; to which he formed his mind by perpetual me-

ditation, in times of peace as well as war. When, in any occasional journey, he came to a strait, difficult passage, if he was alone, he considered with himself, and if he was in company he asked his friends, what it would be best to do if in this place they had found an enemy, either in the front or in the rear, on the one side or on the other? 'It might happen,' says he, 'that the enemy to be opposed might come on drawn up in regular lines, or in a tumultuous body, formed only by the nature of the place.' He then considered a little what ground he should take; what number of soldiers he should use, and what arms he should give them; where he should lodge his carriages, his baggage, and the defenceless followers of his camp; how many guards, and of what kind, he should send to defend them; and whether it would be better to press forward along the pass, or recover by retreat his former station: he would consider likewise where his camp could most commodiously be formed; how much ground he should enclose within his trenches; where he should have the convenience of water, and where he might find plenty of wood and forage; and when he should break up his camp on the following day, through what road he could most safely pass, and in what form he should dispose his troops. With such thoughts and disquisitions he had from his early years so exercised his mind, that on these occasions nothing could happen which he had not been already accustomed to consider."

I cannot help imagining that I see a promising young painter equally vigilant, whether at home or abroad, in the streets or in the fields. Every object that presents itself is to him a lesson. He regards all nature with a view to his profession, and combines her beauties, or corrects her defects. He examines the countenance of men under the influence of passion; and often

catches the most pleasing hints from subjects of turbulence or deformity. Even bad pictures themselves supply him with useful documents; and, as Lionardo da Vinci has observed, he improves upon the fanciful images that are sometimes seen in the fire, or are accidentally sketched upon a discoloured wall.

The Artist who has his mind thus filled with ideas, and his hand made expert by practice, works with ease and readiness; whilst he who would have you believe that he is waiting for the inspirations of Genius, is in reality at a loss how to begin; and is at last delivered of his monsters with difficulty and pain.

The well-grounded Painter, on the contrary, has only maturely to consider his subject, and all the mechanical parts of his art follow without his exertion. Conscious of the difficulty of obtaining what he possesses, he makes no pretensions to secrets, except those of closer application. Without conceiving the smallest jealousy against others, he is contented that all shall be as great as himself who have undergone the same fatigue; and as his pre-eminence depends not upon a trick, he is free from the painful suspicions of a juggler who lives in perpetual fear lest his trick should be discovered.

DISCOURSE III.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 14. 1770.

THE GREAT LEADING PRINCIPLES OF THE GRAND STYLE. — OF BEAUTY. — THE GENUINE HABITS OF NATURE TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THOSE OF FASHION.

GENTLEMEN,

It is not easy to speak with propriety to so many Students of different ages and different degrees of advancement. The mind requires nourishment adapted to its growth; and what may have promoted our earlier efforts might retard us in our nearer approaches to perfection.

The first endeavours of a young Painter, as I have remarked in a former discourse, must be employed in the attainment of mechanical dexterity, and confined to the mere imitation of the object before him. Those who have advanced beyond the rudiments, may, perhaps, find advantage in reflecting on the advice which I have likewise given them, when I recommended the diligent study of the works of our great predecessors; but I at the same time endeavoured to guard them against an implicit submission to the authority of any one master however excellent, or, by a strict imitation of his manner, precluding themselves from the abundance and variety of Nature. I will now add, that Nature herself is not to be too closely copied. There are excellences in the art of painting beyond what is commonly called the imitation of Nature; and these excellences I wish to point out. The Students who,

having passed through the initiatory exercises, are more advanced in the art, and who, sure of their hand, have leisure to exert their understanding, must now be told, that a mere copier of nature can never produce any thing great; can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator.

The wish of the genuine Painter must be more extensive: instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavour to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas; instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame, by captivating the imagination.

The principle now laid down, that the perfection of this art does not consist in mere imitation, is far from being new or singular. It is, indeed, supported by the general opinion of the enlightened part of mankind. The poets, orators, and rhetoricians of antiquity, are continually enforcing this position,—that all the arts receive their perfection from an ideal beauty, superior to what is to be found in individual nature. They are ever referring to the practice of the painters and sculptors of their times, particularly Phidias (the favourite artist of antiquity), to illustrate their assertions. As if they could not sufficiently express their admiration of his genius by what they knew, they have recourse to poetical enthusiasm: they call it inspiration; a gift from heaven. The artist is supposed to have ascended the celestial regions, to furnish his mind with this perfect idea of beauty. "He," says Proclus*, "who takes for his model such forms as Nature produces, and confines himself to an exact imitation of them, will never attain to what is perfectly beautiful. For the works of Nature are full

* Lib. 2. in Timæum Platonis, as cited by Junius de Pictura Veterum.—R.

of disproportion, and fall very short of the true standard of beauty. So that Phidias, when he formed his Jupiter, did not copy any object ever presented to his sight, but contemplated only that image which he had conceived in his mind from Homer's description." And thus Cicero, speaking of the same Phidias:—"Neither did this artist," says he, "when he carved the image of Jupiter or Minerva, set before him any one human figure, as a pattern, which he was to copy; but having a more perfect idea of beauty fixed in his mind, this is steadily contemplated, and to the imitation of this, all his skill and labour were directed."

The Moderns are not less convinced than the Ancients of this superior power existing in the art; nor less sensible of its effects. Every language has adopted terms expressive of this excellence. The *gusto grande* of the Italians, the *beau idéal* of the French, and the *great style*, *genius*, and *taste* among the English, are but different appellations of the same thing. It is this intellectual dignity, they say, that ennobles the Painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanic; and produces those great effects in an instant, which eloquence and poetry, by slow and repeated efforts, are scarcely able to attain.

Such is the warmth with which both the Ancients and Moderns speak of this divine principle of the art; but, as I have formerly observed, enthusiastic admiration seldom promotes knowledge. Though a Student by such praise may have his attention roused, and a desire excited, of running in this great career, yet it is possible that what has been said to excite may only serve to deter him. He examines his own mind, and perceives there nothing of that divine inspiration with which he is told so many others have been favoured. He never travelled to heaven to gather new ideas; and

he finds himself possessed of no other qualifications than what mere common observation and a plain understanding can confer. Thus he becomes gloomy amidst the splendour of figurative declamation, and thinks it hopeless to pursue an object which he supposes out of the reach of human industry.

But on this, as upon many other occasions, we ought to distinguish how much is to be given to enthusiasm, and how much to reason. We ought to allow for, and we ought to commend, that strength of vivid expression, which is necessary to convey, in its full force, the highest sense of the most complete effect of art; taking care, at the same time, not to lose in terms of vague admiration that solidity and truth of principle upon which alone we can reason, and may be enabled to practise.

It is not easy to define in what this great style consists; nor to describe, by words, the proper means of acquiring it, if the mind of the Student should be at all capable of such an acquisition. Could we teach taste or genius by rules, they would be no longer taste and genius. But though there neither are, nor can be, any precise invariable rules for the exercise, or the acquisition, of these great qualities, yet we may truly say, that they always operate in proportion to our attention in observing the works of Nature, to our skill in selecting, and to our care in digesting, methodising, and comparing our observations. There are many beauties in our art that seem, at first, to lie without the reach of precept, and yet may easily be reduced to practical principles. Experience is all in all: but it is not every one who profits by experience; and most people err, not so much from want of capacity to find their object, as from not knowing what object to pursue. This great ideal perfection and beauty

are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us. But the power of discovering what is deformed in Nature, or, in other words, what is particular and uncommon, can be acquired only by experience; and the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.

All the objects which are exhibited to our view by Nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects. The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives these blemishes. It must be an eye long used to the contemplation and comparison of these forms; and which, by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, has acquired the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the Painter who aims at the great style. By this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects Nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original; and, what may seem a paradox, he learns to design naturally by drawing his figures unlike to any one object. This idea of the perfect state of Nature, which the Artist calls the Ideal beauty, is the great leading principle by which works of genius are conducted. By this Phidias acquired his fame. He wrought upon a sober principle what has so much excited the enthusiasm of the world; and

by this method you, who have courage to tread the same path, may acquire equal reputation.

This is the idea which has acquired, and which seems to have a right to, the epithet of *divine;* as it may be said to preside, like a supreme judge, over all the productions of Nature, appearing to be possessed of the will and intention of the Creator, as far as they regard the external form of living beings. When a man once possesses this idea in its perfection, there is no danger but that he will be sufficiently warmed by it himself, and be able to warm and ravish every one else.

Thus it is from a reiterated experience, and a close comparison of the objects in Nature, that an artist becomes possessed of the idea of that central form, if I may so express it, from which every deviation is deformity. But the investigation of this form, I grant, is painful, and I know but of one method of shortening the road; this is, by a careful study of the works of the ancient sculptors; who, being indefatigable in the school of nature, have left models of that perfect form behind them, which an artist would prefer as supremely beautiful, who had spent his whole life in that single contemplation. But if industry carried them thus far, may not you also hope for the same reward from the same labour? We have the same school opened to us that was opened to them; for Nature denies her instructions to none who desire to become her pupils.

This laborious investigation, I am aware, must appear superfluous to those who think every thing is to be done by felicity and the powers of native genius. Even the great Bacon treats with ridicule the idea of confining proportion to rules, or of producing beauty by selection. "A man cannot tell," says he, "whether Apelles or Albert Durer were the more trifler:

whereof the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions; the other, by taking the best parts out of divers faces, to make one excellent. . . . The painter," he adds, "must do it by a kind of felicity, . . . and not by rule."*

It is not safe to question any opinion of so great a writer, and so profound a thinker, as undoubtedly Bacon was. But he studies brevity to excess; and therefore his meaning is sometimes doubtful. If he means that beauty has nothing to do with rule, he is mistaken. There is a rule, obtained out of general nature, to contradict which is to fall into deformity. Whenever any thing is done beyond this rule, it is in virtue of some other rule which is followed along with it, but which does not contradict it. Every thing which is wrought with certainty, is wrought upon some principle. If it is not, it cannot be repeated. If by felicity is meant any thing of chance or hazard, or something born with a man, and not earned, I cannot agree with this great philosopher. Every object which pleases must give us pleasure upon some certain principles: but as the objects of pleasure are almost infinite, so their principles vary without end, and every man finds them out, not by felicity or successful hazard, but by care and sagacity.

To the principle I have laid down, that the idea of beauty in each species of beings is an invariable one, it may be objected, that in every particular species there are various central forms, which are separate and distinct from each other, and yet are undeniably beautiful; that in the human figure, for instance, the beauty of Hercules is one, of the Gladiator another, of the Apollo another; which makes so many different ideas of beauty.

* Essays, p. 252. edit. 1625.

It is true, indeed, that these figures are each perfect in their kind, though of different characters and proportions; but still none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class. And as there is one general form, which, as I have said, belongs to the human kind at large, so in each of these classes there is one common idea and central form, which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to that class. Thus, though the forms of childhood and age differ exceedingly, there is a common form in childhood, and a common form in age, which is the more perfect, as it is more remote from all peculiarities. But I must add further, that though the most perfect forms of each of the general divisions of the human figure are ideal, and superior to any individual form of that class; yet the highest perfection of the human figure is not to be found in any one of them. It is not in the Hercules, nor in the Gladiator, nor in the Apollo; but in that form which is taken from all, and which partakes equally of the activity of the Gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the muscular strength of the Hercules. For perfect beauty in any species must combine all the characters which are beautiful in that species. It cannot consist in any one to the exclusion of the rest: no one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient.

The knowledge of these different characters, and the power of separating and distinguishing them, is undoubtedly necessary to the painter, who is to vary his compositions with figures of various forms and proportions, though he is never to lose sight of the general idea of perfection in each kind.

There is, likewise, a kind of symmetry, or proportion, which may properly be said to belong to

deformity. A figure lean or corpulent, tall or short, though deviating from beauty, may still have a certain union of the various parts, which may contribute to make them on the whole not unpleasing.

When the Artist has by diligent attention acquired a clear and distinct idea of beauty and symmetry; when he has reduced the variety of nature to the abstract idea; his next task will be to become acquainted with the genuine habits of nature, as distinguished from those of fashion. For in the same manner, and on the same principles, as he has acquired the knowledge of the real forms of nature, distinct from accidental deformity, he must endeavour to separate simple chaste nature, from those adventitious, those affected and forced airs or actions, with which she is loaded by modern education.

Perhaps I cannot better explain what I mean, than by reminding you of what was taught us by the Professor of Anatomy, in respect to the natural position and movement of the feet. He observed, that the fashion of turning them outwards was contrary to the intent of nature, as might be seen from the structure of the bones, and from the weakness that proceeded from that manner of standing. To this we may add the erect position of the head, the projection of the chest, the walking with straight knees, and many such actions, which we know to be merely the result of fashion, and what nature never warranted, as we are sure that we have been taught them when children.

I have mentioned but a few of those instances, in which vanity or caprice have contrived to distort and disfigure the human form; your own recollection will add to these a thousand more of ill-understood methods, which have been practised to disguise nature

among our dancing-masters, hair-dressers, and tailors, in their various schools of deformity.*

However the mechanic and ornamental arts may sacrifice to Fashion, she must be entirely excluded from the Art of Painting; the painter must never mistake this capricious changeling for the genuine offspring of nature; he must divest himself of all prejudices in favour of his age or country; he must disregard all local and temporary ornaments, and look only on those general habits which are every where and always the same; he addresses his works to the people of every country and every age, he calls upon posterity to be his spectators, and says, with Zeuxis, *In æternitatem pingo.*

The neglect of separating modern fashions from the habits of nature, leads to that ridiculous style which has been practised by some painters, who have given to Grecian heroes the airs and graces practised in the court of Louis XIV.; an absurdity almost as great as it would have been to have dressed them after the fashion of that court.

To avoid this error, however, and to retain the true simplicity of nature, is a task more difficult than at first sight it may appear. The prejudices in favour of the fashions and customs that we have been used to, and which are justly called a second nature, make it too often difficult to distinguish that which is natural from that which is the result of education; they frequently even give a predilection in favour of the artificial mode; and almost every one is apt to be guided by those local prejudices, who has not chastised his

* "Those," says Quintilian, "who are taken with the outward show of things, think that there is more beauty in persons, who are trimmed, curled, and painted, than uncorrupt nature can give; as if beauty were merely the effect of the corruption of manners." — R.

mind, and regulated the instability of his affections by the eternal invariable idea of nature.

Here, then, as before, we must have recourse to the Ancients as instructors. It is from a careful study of their works that you will be enabled to attain to the real simplicity of nature; they will suggest many observations which would probably escape you, if your study were confined to nature alone. And, indeed, I cannot help suspecting, that, in this instance, the ancients had an easier task than the moderns. They had, probably, little or nothing to unlearn, as their manners were nearly approaching to this desirable simplicity; while the modern artist, before he can see the truth of things, is obliged to remove a veil, with which the fashion of the times has thought proper to cover her.

Having gone thus far in our investigation of the great style in painting; if we now should suppose that the artist has found the true idea of beauty, which enables him to give his works a correct and perfect design; if we should suppose, also, that he has acquired a knowledge of the unadulterated habits of nature, which gives him simplicity; the rest of his task is, perhaps, less than is generally imagined. Beauty and simplicity have so great a share in the composition of a great style, that he who has acquired them has little else to learn. It must not, indeed, be forgotten, that there is a nobleness of conception, which goes beyond any thing in the mere exhibition even of perfect form; there is an art of animating and dignifying the figures with intellectual grandeur, of impressing the appearance of philosophic wisdom, or heroic virtue. This can only be acquired by him that enlarges the sphere of his understanding by a variety of knowledge,

and warms his imagination with the best productions of ancient and modern poetry.

A hand thus exercised, and a mind thus instructed, will bring the art to a higher degree of excellence than, perhaps, it has hitherto attained in this country. Such a student will disdain the humbler walks of painting, which, however profitable, can never assure him a permanent reputation. He will leave the meaner artist servilely to suppose that those are the best pictures, which are most likely to deceive the spectator. He will permit the lower painter, like the florist or collector of shells, to exhibit the minute discriminations, which distinguish one object of the same species from another; while he, like the philosopher, will consider nature in the abstract, and represent in every one of his figures the character of its species.

If deceiving the eye were the only business of the art, there is no doubt, indeed, but the minute painter would be more apt to succeed; but it is not the eye, it is the mind which the painter of genius desires to address; nor will he waste a moment upon those smaller objects which only serve to catch the sense, to divide the attention, and to counteract his great design of speaking to the heart.

This is the ambition which I wish to excite in your minds; and the object I have had in my view, throughout this discourse, is that one great idea which gives to painting its true dignity, which entitles it to the name of a liberal art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry.

It may possibly have happened to many young students, whose application was sufficient to overcome all difficulties, and whose minds were capable of embracing the most extensive views, that they have, by a wrong direction originally given, spent their lives in the meaner walks of painting, without ever knowing

there was a nobler to pursue. Albert Durer, as Vasari has justly remarked, would probably have been one of the first painters of his age (and he lived in an era of great artists), had he been initiated into those great principles of the art, which were so well understood and practised by his contemporaries in Italy. But unluckily having never seen or heard of any other manner, he, without doubt, considered his own as perfect.

As for the various departments of painting, which do not presume to make such high pretensions, they are many. None of them are without their merit, though none enter into competition with this universal presiding idea of the art. The painters who have applied themselves more particularly to low and vulgar characters, and who express with precision the various shades of passion, as they are exhibited by vulgar minds (such as we see in the works of Hogarth), deserve great praise; but as their genius has been employed on low and confined subjects, the praise which we give must be as limited as its object. The merry-making or quarrelling of the Boors of Teniers; the same sort of productions of Brouwer or Ostade, are excellent in their kind; and the excellence and its praise will be in proportion, as, in those limited subjects, and peculiar forms, they introduce more or less of the expression of those passions, as they appear in general and more enlarged nature. This principle may be applied to the Battle-pieces of Bourgognone, the French Gallantries of Watteau, and even beyond the exhibition of animal life, to the Landscapes of Claude Lorraine, and the Sea-Views of Vandervelde. All these painters have, in general, the same right, in different degrees, to the name of a painter, which a

satirist, an epigrammatist, a sonneteer, a writer of pastorals, or descriptive poetry, has to that of a poet.

In the same rank, and perhaps of not so great merit, is the cold painter of portraits. But his correct and just imitation of his object has its merit. Even the painter of still life, whose highest ambition is to give a minute representation of every part of those low objects which he sets before him, deserves praise in proportion to his attainment; because no part of this excellent art, so much the ornament of polished life, is destitute of value and use. These, however, are by no means the views to which the mind of the student ought to be *primarily* directed. Having begun by aiming at better things, if from particular inclination, or from the taste of the time and place he lives in, or from necessity, or from failure in the highest attempts, he is obliged to descend lower, he will bring into the lower sphere of art a grandeur of composition and character, that will raise and ennoble his works far above their natural rank.

A man is not weak, though he may not be able to wield the club of Hercules; nor does a man always practise that which he esteems the best; but does that which he can best do. In moderate attempts there are many walks open to the artist. But as the idea of beauty is of necessity but one, so there can be but one great mode of painting; the leading principle of which I have endeavoured to explain.

I should be sorry, if what is here recommended should be at all understood to countenance a careless or undetermined manner of painting. For, though the painter is to overlook the accidental discriminations of nature, he is to exhibit distinctly, and with precision, the general forms of things. A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the

great style in painting; and, let me add, that he who possesses the knowledge of the exact form which every part of nature ought to have, will be fond of expressing that knowledge with correctness and precision in all his works.

To conclude: I have endeavoured to reduce the idea of beauty to general principles; and I had the pleasure to observe that the Professor of Painting proceeded in the same method, when he showed you that the artifice of contrast was founded but on one principle. I am convinced that this is the only means of advancing science; of clearing the mind from a confused heap of contradictory observations, that do but perplex and puzzle the student, when he compares them, or misguide him if he gives himself up to their authority; bringing them under one general head, can alone give rest and satisfaction to an inquisitive mind.

DISCOURSE IV.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 10. 1771.

GENERAL IDEAS, THE PRESIDING PRINCIPLE WHICH REGULATES EVERY PART OF ART; INVENTION, EXPRESSION, COLOURING, AND DRAPERY. — TWO DISTINCT STYLES IN HISTORY-PAINTING; THE GRAND, AND THE ORNAMENTAL. — THE SCHOOLS IN WHICH EACH IS TO BE FOUND. — THE COMPOSITE STYLE. — THE STYLE FORMED ON LOCAL CUSTOMS AND HABITS, OR A PARTIAL VIEW OF NATURE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it. As this principle is observed or neglected, our profession becomes either a liberal art, or a mechanical trade. In the hands of one man, it makes the highest pretensions, as it is addressed to the noblest faculties: in those of another, it is reduced to a mere matter of ornament; and the painter has but the humble province of furnishing our apartments with elegance.

This exertion of mind, which is the only circumstance that truly ennobles our Art, makes the great distinction between the Roman and Venetian schools. I have formerly observed that perfect form is produced by leaving out particularities, and retaining only general ideas: I shall now endeavour to show that this principle, which I have proved to be metaphysically just, extends itself to every part of the Art; that it

gives what is called the *grand style*, to Invention, to Composition, to Expression, and even to Colouring and Drapery.

Invention, in Painting, does not imply the invention of the subject, for that is commonly supplied by the Poet or Historian. With respect to the choice, no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting. It ought to be either some eminent instance of heroic action or heroic suffering. There must be something, either in the action or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the public sympathy.

Strictly speaking, indeed, no subject can be of universal, hardly can it be of general, concern; but there are events and characters so popularly known in those countries where our Art is in request, that they may be considered as sufficiently general for all our purposes. Such are the great events of Greek and Roman fable and history, which early education, and the usual course of reading, have made familiar and interesting to all Europe, without being degraded by the vulgarism of ordinary life in any country. Such, too, are the capital subjects of Scripture history, which, beside their general notoriety, become venerable by their connection with our religion.

As it is required that the subject selected should be a general one, it is no less necessary that it should be kept unembarrassed with whatever may any way serve to divide the attention of the spectator. Whenever a story is related, every man forms a picture in his mind of the action and expression of the persons employed. The power of representing this mental picture on canvass is what we call invention in a Painter. And as, in the conception of this ideal picture, the mind does not enter into the minute peculiarities of

the dress, furniture, or scene of action; so, when the Painter comes to represent it, he contrives those little necessary concomitant circumstances in such a manner, that they shall strike the spectator no more than they did himself in his first conception of the story.

I am very ready to allow, that some circumstances of minuteness and particularity frequently tend to give an air of truth to a piece, and to interest the spectator in an extraordinary manner. Such circumstances, therefore, cannot wholly be rejected: but if there be any thing in the Art which requires peculiar nicety of discernment, it is the disposition of these minute circumstantial parts; which, according to the judgment employed in the choice, become so useful to truth, or so injurious to grandeur.

However, the usual and most dangerous error is on the side of minuteness; and, therefore, I think caution most necessary where most have failed. The general idea constitutes real excellence. All smaller things, however perfect in their way, are to be sacrificed without mercy to the greater. The Painter will not enquire what things may be admitted without much censure; he will not think it enough to show that they may be there; he will show that they must be there; that their absence would render his picture maimed and defective.

Thus, though to the principal group a second or third be added, and a second and third mass of light, care must be taken that these subordinate actions and lights, neither each in particular, nor all together, come into any degree of competition with the principal: they should merely make a part of that whole which would be imperfect without them. To every kind of painting this rule may be applied. Even in portraits, the grace, and, we may add, the likeness, consists more

in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature.

Thus figures must have a ground whereon to stand; they must be clothed; there must be a background; there must be light and shadow; but none of these ought to appear to have taken up any part of the artist's attention. They should be so managed as not even to catch that of the spectator. We know well enough, when we analyse a piece, the difficulty and the subtilty with which an artist adjusts the background drapery, and masses of light; we know that a considerable part of the grace and effect of his picture depends upon them; but this art is so much concealed, even to a judicious eye, that no remains of any of these subordinate parts occur to the memory when the picture is not present.

The great end of the art is to strike the imagination. The Painter, therefore, is to make no ostentation of the means by which this is done; the spectator is only to feel the result in his bosom. An inferior artist is unwilling that any part of his industry should be lost upon the spectator. He takes as much pains to discover, as the greater artist does to conceal, the marks of his subordinate assiduity. In works of the lower kind, every thing appears studied, and encumbered; it is all boastful art, and open affectation. The ignorant often part from such pictures with wonder in their mouths and indifference in their hearts.

But it is not enough in Invention that the Artist should restrain and keep under all the inferior parts of his subject; he must sometimes deviate from vulgar and strict historical truth, in pursuing the grandeur of his design.

How much the great style exacts from its professors to conceive and represent their subjects in a poetical

manner, not confined to mere matter of fact, may be seen in the Cartoons of Raffaelle. In all the pictures in which the painter has represented the apostles, he has drawn them with great nobleness; he has given them as much dignity as the human figure is capable of receiving; yet we are expressly told in Scripture they had no such respectable appearance; and of St. Paul, in particular, we are told, by himself, that his *bodily* presence was *mean*. Alexander is said to have been of a low stature: a Painter ought not so to represent him. Agesilaus was low, lame, and of a mean appearance: none of these defects ought to appear in a piece of which he is the hero. In conformity to custom, I call this part of the art History Painting; it ought to be called Poetical, as in reality it is.

All this is not falsifying any fact; it is taking an allowed poetical licence. A painter of portraits, retains the individual likeness; a painter of history, shows the man by showing his action. A Painter must compensate the natural deficiencies of his art. He has but one sentence to utter, but one moment to exhibit. He cannot, like the poet or historian, expatiate, and impress the mind with great veneration for the character of the hero or saint he represents, though he lets us know, at the same time, that the saint was deformed, or the hero lame. The painter has no other means of giving an idea of the dignity of the mind, but by that external appearance which grandeur of thought does generally, though not always, impress on the countenance; and by that correspondence of figure to sentiment and situation, which all men wish, but cannot command. The Painter who may in this one particular attain with ease what others desire in vain, ought to give all that he possibly can, since there are so many circumstances of true greatness that he cannot give at

all. He cannot make his hero talk like a great man; he must make him look like one. For which reason he ought to be well studied in the analysis of those circumstances which constitute dignity of appearance in real life.

As in Invention, so likewise in Expression, care must be taken not to run into particularities. Those expressions alone should be given to the figures which their respective situations generally produce. Nor is this enough; each person should also have that expression which men of his rank generally exhibit. The joy, or the grief, of a character of dignity is not to be expressed in the same manner as a similar passion in a vulgar face. Upon this principle, Bernini, perhaps, may be subject to censure. This sculptor, in many respects admirable, has given a very mean expression to his statue of David, who is represented as just going to throw the stone from the sling; and, in order to give it the expression of energy, he has made him biting his under lip. This expression is far from being general, and still farther from being dignified. He might have seen it in an instance or two; and he mistook accident for generality.

With respect to Colouring, though it may appear at first a part of painting merely mechanical, yet it still has its rules, and those grounded upon that presiding principle which regulates both the great and the little in the study of a painter. By this, the first effect of the picture is produced; and as this is performed, the spectator, as he walks the gallery, will stop, or pass along. To give a general air of grandeur at first view, all trifling, or artful play of little lights, or an attention to a variety of tints, is to be avoided; a quietness and simplicity must reign over the whole work; to which a breadth of uniform and simple colour will very much

contribute. Grandeur of effect is produced by two different ways, which seem entirely opposed to each other. One is, by reducing the colours to little more than chiaro oscuro, which was often the practice of the Bolognian schools; and the other, by making the colours very distinct and forcible, such as we see in those of Rome and Florence; but still, the presiding principle of both those manners is simplicity. Certainly, nothing can be more simple than monotony; and the distinct blue, red, and yellow colours which are seen in the draperies of the Roman and Florentine schools, though they have not that kind of harmony which is produced by a variety of broken and transparent colours, have that effect of grandeur which was intended. Perhaps these distinct colours strike the mind more forcibly, from there not being any great union between them; as martial music, which is intended to rouse the nobler passions, has its effect from the sudden and strongly marked transitions from one note to another which that style of music requires; whilst, in that which is intended to move the softer passions, the notes imperceptibly melt into one another.

In the same manner as the historical painter never enters into the detail of colours, so neither does he debase his conceptions with minute attention to the discriminations of drapery. It is the inferior style that marks the variety of stuffs. With him, the clothing is neither woollen, nor linen, nor silk, satin, or velvet: it is drapery; it is nothing more. The art of disposing the foldings of the drapery makes a very considerable part of the painter's study. To make it merely natural, is a mechanical operation, to which neither genius nor taste are required; whereas, it requires the nicest judgment to dispose the drapery, so that the folds shall have an easy communication, and

gracefully follow each other, with such natural negligence as to look like the effect of chance, and at the same time show the figure under it to the utmost advantage.

Carlo Maratti was of opinion, that the disposition of drapery was a more difficult art than even that of drawing the human figure; that a student might be more easily taught the latter than the former; as the rules of drapery, he said, could not be so well ascertained as those for delineating a correct form. This, perhaps, is a proof how willingly we favour our own peculiar excellence. Carlo Maratti is said to have valued himself particularly upon his skill in this part of his art; yet in him, the disposition appears so ostentatiously artificial, that he is inferior to Raffaelle, even in that which gave him his best claim to reputation.

Such is the great principle by which we must be directed in the nobler branches of our art. Upon this principle, the Roman, the Florentine, the Bolognese schools, have formed their practice; and by this they have deservedly obtained the highest praise. These are the three great schools of the world in the epic style. The best of the French school, Poussin, Le Sueur, and Le Brun, have formed themselves upon these models, and consequently may be said, though Frenchmen, to be a colony from the Roman school. Next to these, but in a very different style of excellence, we may rank the Venetian, together with the Flemish and the Dutch schools; all professing to depart from the great purposes of painting, and catching at applause by inferior qualities.

I am not ignorant that some will censure me for placing the Venetians in this inferior class, and many of the warmest admirers of painting will think them unjustly degraded; but I wish not to be misunderstood. Though I can by no means allow them to

hold any rank with the nobler schools of painting, they accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted. But as mere elegance is their principal object, as they seem more willing to dazzle than to affect, it can be no injury to them to suppose that their practice is useful only to its proper end. But what may heighten the elegant may degrade the sublime. There is a simplicity, and, I may add, severity, in the great manner, which is, I am afraid, almost incompatible with this comparatively sensual style.

Tintoret, Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, seem to have painted with no other purpose than to be admired for their skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting, and to make a parade of that art, which, as I before observed, the higher style requires its followers to conceal.

In a conference of the French Academy, at which were present Le Brun, Sebastian Bourdon, and all the eminent Artists of that age, one of the Academicians desired to have their opinion on the conduct of Paul Veronese, who, though a painter of great consideration, had, contrary to the strict rules of art, in his picture of Perseus and Andromeda, represented the principal figure in shade. To this question no satisfactory answer was then given. But I will venture to say, that, if they had considered the class of the Artist, and ranked him as an ornamental Painter, there would have been no difficulty in answering — "It was unreasonable to expect what was never intended. His intention was solely to produce an effect of light and shadow; every thing was to be sacrificed to that intent, and the capricious composition of that picture suited very well with the style which he professed."

Young minds are indeed too apt to be captivated

by this splendour of style; and that of the Venetians is particularly pleasing; for by them, all those parts of the Art that gave pleasure to the eye or sense, have been cultivated with care, and carried to the degree nearest to perfection. The powers exerted in the mechanical part of the Art have been called *the language of Painters;* but we may say, that it is but poor eloquence which only shows that the orator can talk. Words should be employed as the means, not as the end: language is the instrument, conviction is the work.

The language of Painting must indeed be allowed these masters; but even in that, they have shown more copiousness than choice, and more luxuriancy than judgment. If we consider the uninteresting subjects of their invention, or at least the uninteresting manner in which they are treated; if we attend to their capricious composition, their violent and affected contrasts, whether of figures or of light and shadow, the richness of their drapery, and, at the same time, the mean effect which the discrimination of stuffs gives to their pictures; if to these we add their total inattention to expression; and then reflect on the conceptions and the learning of Michael Angelo, or the simplicity of Raffaelle, we can no longer dwell on the comparison. Even in colouring, if we compare the quietness and chastity of the Bolognese pencil to the bustle and tumult that fills every part of a Venetian picture, without the least attempt to interest the passions, their boasted art will appear a mere struggle without effect; *a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.*

Such as suppose that the great style might happily be blended with the ornamental, that the simple, grave,

and majestic dignity of Raffaelle could unite with the glow and bustle of a Paolo, or Tintoret, are totally mistaken. The principles by which each is attained are so contrary to each other, that they seem, in my opinion, incompatible, and as impossible to exist together, as that in the mind the most sublime ideas and the lowest sensuality should at the same time be united.

The subjects of the Venetian Painters are mostly such as give them an opportunity of introducing a great number of figures; such as feasts, marriages, and processions, public martyrdoms, or miracles. I can easily conceive that Paul Veronese, if he were asked, would say, that no subject was proper for an historical picture, but such as admitted at least forty figures; for in a less number, he would assert, there could be no opportunity of the Painter's showing his art in composition, his dexterity of managing and disposing the masses of light and groups of figures, and of introducing a variety of Eastern dresses and characters in their rich stuffs.

But the thing is very different with a pupil of the greater schools. Annibale Caracci thought twelve figures sufficient for any story; he conceived that more would contribute to no end but to fill space; that they would be but cold spectators of the general action, or, to use his own expression, that they would be *figures to be let.* Besides, it is impossible for a picture composed of so many parts to have that effect so indispensably necessary to grandeur, that of one complete whole. However contradictory it may be in geometry, it is true in taste, that many little things will not make a great one. The Sublime impresses the mind at once with one great idea; it is a single blow: the Elegant, indeed, may be produced by re-

petition; by an accumulation of many minute circumstances.

However great the difference is between the composition of the Venetian and the rest of the Italian schools, there is full as great a disparity in the effect of their pictures as produced by colours. And though in this respect the Venetians must be allowed extraordinary skill, yet even that skill, as they have employed it, will but ill correspond with the great style. Their colouring is not only too brilliant, but, I will venture to say, too harmonious, to produce that solidity, steadiness, and simplicity of effect, which heroic subjects require, and which simple or grave colours only can give to a work. That they are to be cautiously studied by those who are ambitious of treading the great walk of history, is confirmed, if it wants confirmation, by the greatest of all authorities, Michael Angelo. This wonderful man, after having seen a picture by Titian, told Vasari, who accompanied him*, "that he liked much his colouring and manner;" but then he added, "that it was a pity the Venetian painters did not learn to draw correctly in their early youth, and adopt a better *manner of study*."

By this it appears, that the principal attention of the Venetian painters, in the opinion of Michael Angelo, seemed to be engrossed by the study of colours, to the neglect of the *ideal beauty of form*, or propriety of expression. But if general censure was given to that school from the sight of a picture of Titian, how much more heavily and more justly would the censure fall on Paolo Veronese, and more especially on Tin-

* Dicendo, che molto gli piaceva il colorito suo, e la maniera: mà che era un peccato, che a Venezia non s'imparasse da principio a disegnare bene, e che non havessano que' pittori miglior modo nello studio. — Vas. tom. iii. p. 226. Vita di Tiziano.

toret? And here I cannot avoid citing Vasari's opinion of the style and manner of Tintoret. "Of all the extraordinary geniuses*," says he, "that have practised the art of painting, for wild, capricious, extravagant, and fantastical inventions, for furious impetuosity and boldness in the execution of his work, there is none like Tintoret; his strange whimsies are even beyond extravagance; and his works seem to be produced rather by chance, than in consequence of any previous design, as if he wanted to convince the world that the art was a trifle, and of the most easy attainment."

For my own part, when I speak of the Venetian painters, I wish to be understood to mean Paolo Veronese and Tintoret, to the exclusion of Titian; for though his style is not so pure as that of many other of the Italian schools, yet there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him, which, however awkward in his imitators, seems to become him exceedingly. His portraits alone, from the nobleness and simplicity of character which he always gave them, will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank in this branch of the art.

It is not with Titian, but with the seducing qualities of the two former, that I could wish to caution you against being too much captivated. These are the persons who may be said to have exhausted all the powers of florid eloquence, to debauch the young and

* Nelle cose della pittura, stravagante, capriccioso, presto, e resoluto, et il più terrible cervello, che habbia havuto mai la pittura, come si può vedere in tutte le sue opere; e ne' componimenti delle storie, fantastiche, e fatte da lui diversamente, e fuori dell' uso degli altri pittori: anzi hà superato la stravaganza, con le nuove, e capricciose inventioni, e strani ghiribizzi del suo intelleto, che ha lavorato a caso, e senza diseg no, quasi nonstrando che quest' arte è una baia.

unexperienced; and have, without doubt, been the cause of turning off the attention of the connoisseur and of the patron of art, as well as that of the painter, from those higher excellences of which the art is capable, and which ought to be required in every considerable production. By them, and their imitators, a style merely ornamental has been disseminated throughout all Europe. Rubens carried it to Flanders; Voet to France; and Lucca Giordano to Spain and Naples.

The Venetian is indeed the most splendid of the schools of elegance; and it is not without reason that the best performances in this lower school are valued higher than the second-rate performances of those above them; for every picture has value when it has a decided character, and is excellent in its kind. But the student must take care not to be so much dazzled with this splendour, as to be tempted to imitate what must ultimately lead from perfection. Poussin, whose eye was always steadily fixed on the Sublime, has been often heard to say, "That a particular attention to colouring was an obstacle to the student, in his progress to the great end and design of the art; and that he who attaches himself to this principal end, will acquire by practice a reasonably good method of colouring." *

Though it be allowed that elaborate harmony of colouring, a brilliancy of tints, a soft and gradual transition from one to another, present to the eye, what an harmonious concert of music does to the ear, it must be remembered, that painting is not merely a

* Que cette application singulière n'étoit qu'un obstacle pour empêcher de parvenir au véritable but de la peinture, et celui qui s'attache au principal, acquiert par la pratique une assez belle manière de peindre.—Conférence de l'Acad. Franç.

gratification of the sight. Such excellence, though properly cultivated, where nothing higher than elegance is intended, is weak and unworthy of regard, when the work aspires to grandeur and sublimity.

The same reasons that have been urged to show that a mixture of the Venetian style cannot improve the great style, will hold good in regard to the Flemish and Dutch schools. Indeed the Flemish school, of which Rubens is the head, was formed upon that of the Venetian; like them, he took his figures too much from the people before him. But it must be allowed in favour of the Venetians, that he was more gross than they, and carried all their mistaken methods to a far greater excess. In the Venetian school itself, where they all err from the same cause, there is a difference in the effect. The difference between Paolo and Bassano seems to be only, that one introduced Venetian gentlemen into his pictures, and the other the boors of the district of Bassano, and called them patriarchs and prophets.

The painters of the Dutch school have still more locality. With them, a history-piece is properly a portrait of themselves; whether they describe the inside or outside of their houses, we have their own people engaged in their own peculiar occupations; working or drinking, playing or fighting. The circumstances that enter into a picture of this kind, are so far from giving a general view of human life, that they exhibit all the minute particularities of a nation differing in several respects from the rest of mankind. Yet, let them have their share of more humble praise. The painters of this school are excellent in their own way; they are only ridiculous when they attempt general history on their own narrow principles, and debase great events by the meanness of their characters.

Some inferior dexterity, some extraordinary me-

chanical power is apparently that from which they seek distinction. Thus, we see, that school alone has the custom of representing candle-light not as it really appears to us by night, but red, as it would illuminate objects to a spectator by day. Such tricks, however pardonable in the little style, where petty effects are the sole end, are inexcusable in the greater, where the attention should never be drawn aside by trifles, but should be entirely occupied by the subject itself.

The same local principles which characterise the Dutch school extend even to their landscape painters; and Rubens himself, who has painted many landscapes, has sometimes transgressed in this particular. Their pieces in this way are, I think, always a representation of an individual spot, and each in its kind a very faithful but a very confined portrait. Claude Lorrain, on the contrary, was convinced, that taking nature as he found it seldom produced beauty. His pictures are a composition of the various draughts which he had previously made from various beautiful scenes and prospects. However, Rubens in some measure has made amends for the deficiency with which he is charged; he has contrived to raise and animate his otherwise uninteresting views, by introducing a rainbow, storm, or some particular accidental effect of light. That the practice of Claude Lorrain, in respect to his choice, is to be adopted by Landscape-painters in opposition to that of the Flemish and Dutch schools, there can be no doubt, as its truth is founded upon the same principle as that by which the Historical Painter acquires perfect form. But whether landscape painting has a right to aspire so far as to reject what the painters call Accidents of Nature, is not easy to determine. It is certain Claude Lorrain seldom, if ever, availed himself of those accidents; either he thought

that such peculiarities were contrary to that style of general nature which he professed, or that it would catch the attention too strongly, and destroy that quietness and repose which he thought necessary to that kind of painting.

A Portrait-painter likewise, when he attempts history, unless he is upon his guard, is likely to enter too much into the detail. He too frequently makes his historical heads look like portraits; and this was once the custom amongst those old painters, who revived the art before general ideas were practised or understood. A History-painter paints man in general; a Portrait-painter, a particular man, and consequently a defective model.

Thus an habitual practice in the lower exercises of the art will prevent many from attaining the greater. But such of us who move in these humbler walks of the profession, are not ignorant that, as the natural dignity of the subject is less, the more all the little ornamental helps are necessary to its embellishment. It would be ridiculous for a painter of domestic scenes, of portraits, landscapes, animals, or still life, to say that he despised those qualities which has made the subordinate schools so famous. The art of colouring, and the skilful management of light and shadow, are essential requisites in his confined labours. If we descend still lower, what is the painter of fruit and flowers without the utmost art in colouring, and what the painters call handling; that is, a lightness of pencil that implies great practice, and gives the appearance of being done with ease? Some here, I believe, must remember a flower-painter whose boast it was, that he scorned to paint for the *million:* no, he professed to paint in the true Italian taste; and, despising the crowd, called strenuously upon the *few* to admire him.

His idea of the Italian taste was to paint as black and dirty as he could, and to leave all clearness and brilliancy of colouring to those who were fonder of money than immortality. The consequence was such as might be expected. For these petty excellences are here essential beauties; and without this merit the artist's work will be more short-lived than the objects of his imitation.

From what has been advanced, we must now be convinced that there are two distinct styles in history-painting: the grand, and the splendid or ornamental.

The great style stands alone, and does not require, perhaps does not so well admit, any addition from inferior beauties. The ornamental style also possesses its own peculiar merit. However, though the union of the two may make a sort of composite style, yet that style is likely to be more imperfect than either of those which go to its composition. Both kinds have merit, and may be excellent though in different ranks, if uniformity be preserved, and the general and particular ideas of nature be not mixed. Even the meanest of them is difficult enough to attain; and the first place being already occupied by the great artists in each department, some of those who followed thought there was less room for them; and feeling the impulse of ambition and the desire of novelty, and being at the same time, perhaps, willing to take the shortest way, endeavoured to make for themselves a place between both. This they have effected by forming an union of the different orders. But as the grave and majestic style would suffer by an union with the florid and gay, so also has the Venetian ornament in some respect been injured by attempting an alliance with simplicity.

It may be asserted, that the great style is always more or less contaminated by any meaner mixture.

But it happens in a few instances that the lower may be improved by borrowing from the grand. Thus if a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent, which has annexed to it no ideas of meanness from its being familiar to us. But if an exact resemblance of an individual be considered as the sole object to be aimed at, the portrait-painter will be apt to lose more than he gains by the acquired dignity taken from general nature. It is very difficult to ennoble the character of a countenance but at the expense of the likeness, which is what is most generally required by such as sit to the painter.

Of those who have practised the composite style, and have succeeded in this perilous attempt, perhaps the foremost is Correggio. His style is founded upon modern grace and elegance, to which is superadded something of the simplicity of the grand style. A breadth of light and colour, the general ideas of the drapery, an uninterrupted flow of outline, all conspire to this effect. Next to him (perhaps equal to him), Parmegiano has dignified the genteelness of modern effeminacy, by uniting it with the simplicity of the ancients and the grandeur and severity of Michel Angelo. It must be confessed, however, that these two extraordinary men, by endeavouring to give the utmost degree of grace, have sometimes perhaps exceeded its boundaries, and have fallen into the most hateful of all hateful qualities — affectation. Indeed, it is the peculiar characteristic of men of genius to be afraid of coldness and insipidity, from which they think they never can be too far removed. It particularly

happens to these great masters of grace and elegance. They often boldly drive on to the very verge of ridicule; the spectator is alarmed, but at the same time admires their vigour and intrepidity:—

> Strange graces still, and stranger flights they had,
> . . . . . .
> Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
> As when they touch'd the brink of all we hate.

The errors of genius, however, are pardonable, and none even of the more exalted painters are wholly free from them; but they have taught us, by the rectitude of their general practice, to correct their own affected or accidental deviation. The very first have not been always upon their guard, and perhaps there is not a fault but what may take shelter under the most venerable authorities; yet that style only is perfect, in which the noblest principles are uniformly pursued; and those masters only are entitled to the first rank in our estimation who have enlarged the boundaries of their art, and have raised it to its highest dignity, by exhibiting the general ideas of nature.

On the whole, it seems to me that there is but one presiding principle which regulates and gives stability to every art. The works, whether of poets, painters, moralists, or historians, which are built upon general nature, live for ever; while those which depend for their existence on particular customs and habits, a partial view of nature, or the fluctuation of fashion, can only be coeval with that which first raised them from obscurity. Present time and future may be considered as rivals; and he who solicits the one must expect to be discountenanced by the other.

DISCOURSE V.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 10. 1772.

CIRCUMSPECTION REQUIRED IN ENDEAVOURING TO UNITE CONTRARY EXCELLENCES. — THE EXPRESSION OF A MIXED PASSION NOT TO BE ATTEMPTED. — EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO EXCELLED IN THE GREAT STYLE. — RAFFAELLE, MICHAEL ANGELO, THOSE TWO EXTRAORDINARY MEN COMPARED WITH EACH OTHER. — THE CHARACTERISTICAL STYLE. — SALVATOR ROSA MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THAT STYLE; AND OPPOSED TO CARLO MARATTI. — SKETCH OF THE CHARACTERS OF POUSSIN AND RUBENS. — THESE TWO PAINTERS ENTIRELY DISSIMILAR, BUT CONSISTENT WITH THEMSELVES. — THIS CONSISTENCY REQUIRED IN ALL PARTS OF THE ART.

GENTLEMEN,

I PURPOSE to carry on in this discourse the subject which I began in my last. It was my wish upon that occasion to incite you to pursue the higher excellences of the art. But I fear that in this particular I have been misunderstood. Some are ready to imagine, when any of their favourite acquirements in the art are properly classed, that they are utterly disgraced. This is a very great mistake: nothing has its proper lustre but in its proper place. That which is most worthy of esteem in its allotted sphere, becomes an object, not of respect, but of derision, when it is forced into a higher, to which it is not suited; and there it becomes doubly a source of disorder, by occupying a situation which is not natural to it, and by putting down from the first place what is in reality of too much magnitude to become with grace and proportion that subordinate

station, to which something of less value would be much better suited.

My advice, in a word, is this:—Keep your principal attention fixed upon the higher excellences. If you compass them, and compass nothing more, you are still in the first class. We may regret the innumerable beauties which you may want; you may be very imperfect: but still you are an imperfect artist of the highest order.

If when you have got thus far, you can add any, or all, of the subordinate qualifications, it is my wish and advice that you should not neglect them. But this is as much a matter of circumspection and caution at least, as of eagerness and pursuit.

The mind is apt to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects; and that scale of perfection which I wish always to be preserved, is in the greatest danger of being totally disordered, and even inverted.

Some excellences bear to be united, and are improved by union; others are of a discordant nature; and the attempt to join them, only produces a harsh jarring of incongruent principles. The attempt to unite contrary excellences (of form, for instance) in a single figure, can never escape degenerating into the monstrous, but by sinking into the insipid; by taking away its marked character, and weakening its expression.

This remark is true to a certain degree with regard to the passions. If you mean to preserve the most perfect beauty *in its most perfect state*, you cannot express the passions, all of which produce distortion and deformity, more or less in the most beautiful faces.

Guido, from want of choice in adapting his subject to his ideas and his powers, or from attempting to preserve beauty where it could not be preserved, has in

this respect succeeded very ill. His figures are often engaged in subjects that required great expression: yet his Judith and Holofernes, the daughter of Herodias with the Baptist's head, the Andromeda, and some even of the Mothers of the Innocents, have little more expression than his Venus attired by the Graces.

Obvious as these remarks appear, there are many writers on our art, who, not being of the profession, and consequently not knowing what can or cannot be done, have been very liberal of absurd praises in their descriptions of favourite works. They always find in them what they are resolved to find. They praise excellences that can hardly exist together; and, above all things, are fond of describing, with great exactness, the expression of a mixed passion, which more particularly appears to me out of the reach of our art.

Such are many disquisitions which I have read on some of the Cartoons and other pictures of Raffaelle, where the critics have described their own imaginations; or, indeed, where the excellent master himself may have attempted this expression of passions above the powers of the art; and has, therefore, by an indistinct and imperfect marking, left room for every imagination, with equal probability to find a passion of his own. What has been, and what can be done in the art, is sufficiently difficult; we need not be mortified or discouraged at not being able to execute the conceptions of a romantic imagination. Art has its boundaries, though imagination has none. We can easily, like the ancients, suppose a Jupiter to be possessed of all those powers and perfections which the subordinate deities were endowed with separately. Yet, when they employed their art to represent him, they confined his character to majesty alone. Pliny, therefore,

though we are under great obligations to him for the information he has given us in relation to the works of the ancient artists, is very frequently wrong when he speaks of them, which he does very often, in the style of many of our modern connoisseurs. He observes, that in a statue of Paris, by Euphranor, you might discover, at the same time, three different characters; the dignity of a Judge of the Goddesses, the Lover of Helen, and the Conqueror of Achilles. A statue, in which you endeavour to unite stately dignity, youthful elegance, and stern valour, must surely possess none of these to any eminent degree.

From hence it appears, that there is much difficulty, as well as danger, in an endeavour to concentrate, in a single subject, those various powers, which, rising from different points, naturally move in different directions.

The summit of excellence seems to be an assemblage of contrary qualities, but mixed in such proportions, that no one part is found to counteract the other. How hard this is to be attained in every art, those only know, who have made the greatest progress in their respective professions.

To conclude what I have to say on this part of the subject, which I think of great importance, I wish you to understand, that I do not discourage the younger Students from the noble attempt of uniting all the excellences of art; but suggest to them, that, beside the difficulties which attend every arduous attempt, there is a peculiar difficulty in the choice of the excellences which ought to be united. I wish you to attend to this, that you may try yourselves, whenever you are capable of that trial, what you can, and what you cannot do; and that, instead of dissipating your natural faculties over the immense field of possible

excellence, you may choose some particular walk in which you may exercise all your powers, in order that each of you may become the first in his way. If any man shall be master of such a transcendent, commanding, and ductile genius, as to enable him to rise to the highest, and to stoop to the lowest, flights of art, and to sweep over all of them, unobstructed and secure, he is fitter to give example than to receive instruction.

Having said thus much on the *union* of excellences, I will next say something of the subordination in which various excellences ought to be kept.

I am of opinion, that the ornamental style, which, in my discourse of last year, I cautioned you against considering as *principal*, may not be wholly unworthy the attention even of those who aim at the grand style, when it is properly placed and properly reduced.

But this study will be used with far better effect, if its principles are employed in softening the harshness and mitigating the rigour of the great style, than if it attempt to stand forward with any pretensions of its own, to positive and original excellence. It was thus Ludovico Caracci, whose example I formerly recommended to you, employed it. He was acquainted with the works both of Correggio and the Venetian painters, and knew the principles by which they produced those pleasing effects, which, at the first glance, prepossess us so much in their favour; but he took only as much from each as would embellish, but not overpower, that manly strength and energy of style, which is his peculiar character.

Since I have already expatiated so largely in my former discourse, and in my present, upon the *styles* and *characters* of Painting, it will not be at all unsuitable to my subject, if I mention to you some particulars relative to the leading principles, and capital works,

of those who excelled in the *great style*, that I may bring you from abstraction nearer to practice, and by exemplifying the positions which I have laid down, enable you to understand more clearly what I would enforce.

The principal works of modern art are in *Fresco*, a mode of painting which excludes attention to minute elegancies: yet these works in Fresco, are the productions on which the fame of the greatest masters depends. Such are the pictures of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle in the Vatican; to which we may add the Cartoons; which, though not strictly to be called Fresco, yet may be put under that denomination; and such are the works of Giulio Romano at Mantua. If these performances were destroyed, with them would be lost the best part of the reputation of those illustrious painters; for these are justly considered as the greatest efforts of our art which the world can boast. To these, therefore, we should principally direct our attention for higher excellencies. As for the lower arts, as they have been once discovered, they may be easily attained by those possessed of the former.

Raffaelle, who stands in general foremost of the first painters, owes his reputation, as I have observed, to his excellence in the higher parts of the art: his works in *Fresco*, therefore, ought to be the first object of our study and attention. His easel-works stand in a lower degree of estimation: for though he continually, to the day of his death, embellished his performances more and more with the addition of those lower ornaments, which entirely make the merit of some painters, yet he never arrived at such perfection as to make him an object of imitation. He never was able to conquer perfectly that dryness, or even littleness of manner, which he inherited from his master. He never ac-

quired that nicety of taste in colours, that breadth of light and shadow, that art and management of uniting light to light, and shadow to shadow, so as to make the object rise out of the ground, with the plenitude of effect so much admired in the works of Correggio. When he painted in oil, his hand seemed to be so cramped and confined, that he not only lost that facility and spirit, but I think even that correctness of form, which is so perfect and admirable in his Fresco-works. I do not recollect any pictures of his of this kind, except the Transfiguration, in which there are not some parts that appear to be even feebly drawn. That this is not a necessary attendant on Oil-painting, we have abundant instances in more modern painters. Ludovico Caracci, for instance, preserved in his works in oil the same spirit, vigour, and correctness which he had in Fresco. I have no desire to degrade Raffaelle from the high rank which he deservedly holds: but by comparing him with himself, he does not appear to me to be the same man in Oil as in Fresco.

From those who have ambition to tread in this great walk of the art, Michael Angelo claims the next attention. He did not possess so many excellencies as Raffaelle, but those which he had were of the highest kind. He considered the art as consisting of little more than what may be attained by sculpture: correctness of form, and energy of character. We ought not to expect more than an artist intends in his work. He never attempted those lesser elegancies and graces in the art. Vasari says, he never painted but one picture in oil, and resolved never to paint another, saying, it was an employment only fit for women and children.

If any man had a right to look down upon the lower accomplishments as beneath his attention, it was cer-

tainly Michael Angelo; nor can it be thought strange, that such a mind should have slighted or have been withheld from paying due attention to all those graces and embellishments of art, which have diffused such lustre over the works of other painters.

It must be acknowledged, however, that together with these, which we wish he had more attended to, he has rejected all the false, though specious ornaments, which disgrace the works even of the most esteemed artists; and, I will venture to say, that when those higher excellencies are more known and cultivated by the artists and the patrons of arts, his fame and credit will increase with our increasing knowledge. His name will then be held in the same veneration as it was in the enlightened age of Leo the Tenth: and it is remarkable that the reputation of this truly great man has been continually declining as the art itself has declined. For I must remark to you, that it has long been much on the decline, and that our only hope of its revival will consist in your being thoroughly sensible of its deprivation and decay. It is to Michael Angelo, that we owe even the existence of Raffaelle: it is to him Raffaelle owes the grandeur of his style. He was taught by him to elevate his thoughts, and to conceive his subjects with dignity. His genius, however, formed to blaze and to shine, might, like fire in combustible matter, for ever have lain dormant, if it had not caught a spark by its contact with Michael Angelo; and though it never burst out with *his* extraordinary heat and vehemence, yet it must be acknowledged to be a more pure, regular, and chaste flame. Though our judgment must, upon the whole, decide in favour of Raffaelle, yet he never takes such a firm hold and entire possession of the mind as to make us desire nothing else, and to feel nothing wanting. The effect

of the capital works of Michael Angelo perfectly corresponds to what Bouchardon said he felt from reading Homer; his whole frame appeared to himself to be enlarged, and all nature which surrounded him, diminished to atoms.

If we put these great artists in a light of comparison with each other, Raffaelle had more Taste and Fancy; Michael Angelo, more Genius and Imagination. The one excelled in beauty, the other in energy. Michael Angelo has more of the poetical Inspiration; his ideas are vast and sublime; his people are a superior order of beings; there is nothing about them, nothing in the air of their actions, or their attitudes, or the style and cast of their limbs or features, that reminds us of their belonging to our own species. Raffaelle's imagination is not so elevated; his figures are not so much disjoined from our own diminutive race of beings, though his ideas are chaste, noble, and of great conformity to their subjects. Michael Angelo's works have a strong, peculiar, and marked character: they seem to proceed from his own mind entirely, and that mind so rich and abundant, that he never needed, or seemed to disdain, to look abroad for foreign help. Raffaelle's materials are generally borrowed, though the noble structure is his own. The excellency of this extraordinary man lay in the propriety, beauty, and majesty of his characters, the judicious contrivance of his Composition, his correctness of Drawing, purity of Taste, and skilful accommodation of other men's conceptions to his own purpose. Nobody excelled him in that judgment, with which he united to his own observations on Nature, the energy of Michael Angelo, and the Beauty and Simplicity of the Antique. To the question, therefore, which ought to hold the first rank, Raffaelle or Michael Angelo, it must be an-

swered, that if it is to be given to him who possessed a greater combination of the higher qualities of the art than any other man, there is no doubt but Raffaelle is the first. But if, as Longinus thinks, the sublime, being the highest excellence that human composition can attain to, abundantly compensates the absence of every other beauty, and atones for all other deficiencies, then Michael Angelo demands the preference.

These two extraordinary men carried some of the higher excellencies of the art to a greater degree of perfection than probably they ever arrived at before. They certainly have not been excelled, nor equalled since. Many of their successors were induced to leave this great road as a beaten path, endeavouring to surprise and please by something uncommon or new. When this desire of novelty has proceeded from mere idleness or caprice, it is not worth the trouble of criticism; but when it has been the result of a busy mind of a peculiar complexion, it is always striking and interesting, never insipid.

Such is the great style, as it appears in those who possessed it at its height: in this, search after novelty, in conception or in treating the subject, has no place.

But there is another style, which, though inferior to the former, has still great merit, because it shows that those who cultivated it were men of lively and vigourous imagination. This, which may be called the original or characteristical style, being less referred to any true archetype existing either in general or particular nature, must be supported by the painter's consistency in the principles which he has assumed, and in the union and harmony of his whole design. The excellency of every style, but of the subordinate styles more especially, will very much depend on preserving that union and

harmony between all the component parts, that they may appear to hang well together, as if the whole proceeded from one mind. It is in the works of art as in the characters of men. The faults or defects of some men seem to become them, when they appear to be the natural growth, and of a piece with the rest of their character. A faithful picture of a mind, though it be not of the most elevated kind, though it be irregular, wild, and incorrect, yet if it be marked with that spirit and firmness which characterise works of genius, will claim attention, and be more striking than a combination of excellencies that do not seem to unite well together; or we may say, than a work that possesses even all excellencies, but those in a moderate degree.

One of the strongest-marked characters of this kind, which must be allowed to be subordinate to the great style, is that of Salvator Rosa. He gives us a peculiar cast of nature, which, though void of all grace, elegance, and simplicity, though it has nothing of that elevation and dignity which belongs to the grand style, yet has that sort of dignity which belongs to savage and uncultivated nature: but what is most to be admired in him, is the perfect correspondence which he observed between the subjects which he chose, and his manner of treating them. Everything is of a piece: his Rocks, Trees, Sky, even to his handling, have the same rude and wild character which animates his figures.

With him we may contrast the character of Carlo Maratti, who, in my opinion, had no great vigour of mind or strength of original genius. He rarely seizes the imagination by exhibiting the higher excellencies, nor does he captivate us by that originality which attends the painter who thinks for himself. He knew and practised all the rules of art, and from a com-

position of Raffaelle, Caracci, and Guido, made up a style, of which the only fault was, that it had no manifest defects and no striking beauties; and that the principles of his composition are never blended together so as to form one uniform body original in its kind, or excellent in any view.

I will mention two other painters, who, though entirely dissimilar, yet by being each consistent with himself, and possessing a manner entirely his own, have both gained reputation, though for very opposite accomplishments. The painters I mean are Rubens and Poussin. Rubens I mention in this place, as I think him a remarkable instance of the same mind being seen in all the various parts of the art. The whole is so much of a piece, that one can scarce be brought to believe but that if any one of the qualities he possessed had been more correct and perfect, his works would not have been so complete as they now appear. If we should allow him a greater purity and correctness of Drawing, his want of Simplicity in Composition, Colouring, and Drapery, would appear more gross.

In his Composition his art is too apparent. His figures have expression, and act with energy, but without simplicity or dignity. His colouring, in which he is eminently skilled, is notwithstanding too much of what we call tinted. Throughout the whole of his works, there is a proportionable want of that nicety of distinction and elegance of mind, which is required in the higher walks of painting: and to this want it may be in some degree ascribed, that those qualities which make the excellency of this subordinate style appear in him with their greatest lustre. Indeed the facility with which he invented, the richness of his composition, the luxuriant harmony and brilliancy of his colouring, so dazzle the eye, that whilst his works continue before

us, we cannot help thinking that all his deficiencies are fully supplied.*

Opposed to this florid, careless, loose, and inaccurate style, that of the simple, careful, pure, and correct style of Poussin, seems to be a complete contrast. Yet however opposite their characters, in one thing they agreed; both of them always preserving a perfect correspondence between all the parts of their respective manners: insomuch that it may be doubted whether any alteration of what is considered as defective in either, would not destroy the effect of the whole.

Poussin lived and conversed with the ancient statues so long, that he may be said to have been better acquainted with them than with the people who were about him. I have often thought that he carried his veneration for them so far as to wish to give his works the air of Ancient Paintings. It is certain he copied some of the Antique Paintings, particularly the Marriage in the Aldobrandini-Palace at Rome, which I believe to be the best relic of those remote ages that has yet been found.

No works of any modern have so much of the air of Antique Painting as those of Poussin. His best performances have a remarkable dryness of manner, which though by no means to be recommended for imitation, yet seems perfectly correspondent to that ancient simplicity which distinguishes his style. Like Polidoro he studied the ancients so much that he acquired a habit of thinking in their way, and seemed to know perfectly the actions and gestures they would use on every occasion.

Poussin in the latter part of his life changed from his dry manner to one much softer and richer, where

* A more detailed character of Rubens may be found in the "Journey to Flanders and Holland," near the conclusion. — M.

there is a greater union between the figures and ground; as in the Seven Sacraments in the Duke of Orleans's collection; but neither these, or any of his other pictures in this manner, are at all comparable to many in this dry manner which we have in England.

The favourite subjects of Poussin were Ancient Fables; and no painter was ever better qualified to paint such subjects, not only from his being eminently skilled in the knowledge of the ceremonies, customs, and habits of the Ancients, but from his being so well acquainted with the different characters which those who invented them gave to their allegorical figures. Though Rubens has shown great fancy in his Satyrs, Silenuses, and Fauns, yet they are not that distinct separate class of beings, which is carefully exhibited by the Ancients, and by Poussin. Certainly, when such subjects of antiquity are represented, nothing in the picture ought to remind us of modern times. The mind is thrown back into antiquity, and nothing ought to be introduced that may tend to awaken it from the illusion.

Poussin seemed to think that the style and the language in which such stories are told, is not the worse for preserving some relish of the old way of painting, which seemed to give a general uniformity to the whole, so that the mind was thrown back into antiquity not only by the subject, but the execution.

If Poussin, in imitation of the Ancients, represents Apollo driving his chariot out of the sea by way of representing the Sun rising, if he personifies Lakes and Rivers, it is nowise offensive in him; but seems perfectly of a piece with the general air of the picture. On the contrary, if the figures which people his pictures had a modern air or countenance, if they appeared like our countrymen, if the draperies were like

cloth or silk of our manufacture, if the landscape had the appearance of a modern view, how ridiculous would Apollo appear instead of the Sun; an old Man, or a Nymph with an urn, to represent a River or a Lake?

I cannot avoid mentioning here a circumstance in portrait-painting, which may help to confirm what has been said. When a portrait is painted in the Historical Style, as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual, nor completely ideal, every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture. The simplicity of the antique air and attitude, however much to be admired, is ridiculous when joined to a figure in a modern dress. It is not to my purpose to enter into the question at present, whether this mixed style ought to be adopted or not; yet if it is chosen, it is necessary it should be complete, and all of a piece: the difference of stuffs, for instance, which make the clothing, should be distinguished in the same degree as the head deviates from a general idea. Without this union, which I have so often recommended, a work can have no marked and determined character, which is the peculiar and constant evidence of genius. But when this is accomplished to a high degree, it becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have fixed as the highest.

Thus I have given a sketch of the characters of Rubens and Salvator Rosa, as they appear to me to have the greatest uniformity of mind throughout their whole work. But we may add to these, all those Artists who are at the head of a class, and have had a school of imitators from Michael Angelo down to Watteau. Upon the whole it appears that, setting aside the Ornamental Style, there are two different modes, either of which a Student may adopt without

degrading the dignity of his art. The object of the first, is to combine the higher excellencies and embellish them to the greatest advantage: of the other, to carry one of these excellencies to the highest degree. But those who possess neither, must be classed with them, who, as Shakspeare says, are *men of no mark or likelihood.*

I inculcate as frequently as I can your forming yourselves upon great principles and great models. Your time will be much mis-spent in every other pursuit. Small excellencies should be viewed, not studied; they ought to be viewed, because nothing ought to escape a Painter's observation: but for no other reason.

There is another caution which I wish to give you. Be as select in those whom you endeavour to please, as in those whom you endeavour to imitate. Without the love of fame you can never do any thing excellent; but by an excessive and undistinguishing thirst after it, you will come to have vulgar views; you will degrade your style; and your taste will be entirely corrupted. It is certain that the lowest style will be the most popular, as it falls within the compass of ignorance itself; and the Vulgar will always be pleased with what is natural, in the confined and misunderstood sense of the word.

One would wish that such depravation of taste should be counteracted with that manly pride which actuated Euripides when he said to the Athenians who criticised his works, "I do not compose my works in order to be corrected by you, but to instruct you." It is true, to have a right to speak thus, a man must be an Euripides. However, thus much may be allowed, that when an Artist is sure that he is upon firm ground, supported by the authority and practice of his predecessors of the greatest reputation, he may then as-

sume the boldness and intrepidity of genius; at any rate he must not be tempted out of the right path by any allurement of popularity, which always accompanies the lower styles of painting.

I mention this, because our Exhibitions, while they produce such admirable effects by nourishing emulation, and calling out genius, have also a mischievous tendency, by seducing the Painter to an ambition of pleasing indiscriminately the mixed multitude of people who resort to them.

DISCOURSE VI.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 10. 1774.

IMITATION. — GENIUS BEGINS WHERE RULES END. — INVENTION: ACQUIRED BY BEING CONVERSANT WITH THE INVENTIONS OF OTHERS. — THE TRUE METHOD OF IMITATING. — BORROWING, HOW FAR ALLOWABLE. — SOMETHING TO BE GATHERED FROM EVERY SCHOOL.

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I have taken the liberty of addressing you on the course and order of your studies, I never proposed to enter into a minute detail of the art. This I have always left to the several Professors, who pursue the end of our institution with the highest honour to themselves, and with the greatest advantage to the Students.

My purpose in the discourses I have held in the Academy has been to lay down certain general positions, which seem to me proper for the formation of a sound taste: principles necessary to guard the pupils against those errors into which the sanguine temper common to their time of life has a tendency to lead them: and which have rendered abortive the hopes of so many successions of promising young men in all parts of Europe. I wished also, to intercept and suppress those prejudices which particularly prevail when the mechanism of painting is come to its perfection; and which, when they do prevail, are certain utterly to destroy the higher and more valuable parts of this literate and liberal profession.

These two have been my principal purposes; they are still as much my concern as ever; and if I repeat my own notions on the subject, you who know how fast mistake and prejudice, when neglected, gain ground upon truth and reason, will easily excuse me. I only attempt to set the same thing in the greatest variety of lights.

The subject of this discourse will be IMITATION, as far as a painter is concerned in it. By imitation, I do not mean imitation in its largest sense, but simply the following of other masters, and the advantage to be drawn from the study of their works.

Those who have undertaken to write on our art, and have represented it as a kind of *inspiration*, as a *gift* bestowed upon peculiar favourites at their birth, seem to insure a much more favourable disposition from their readers, and have a much more captivating and liberal air, than he who attempts to examine, coldly, whether there are any means by which this art may be acquired; how the mind may be strengthened and expanded, and what guides will show the way to eminence.

It is very natural for those who are unacquainted with the *cause* of any thing extraordinary, to be astonished at the *effect*, and to consider it as a kind of magic. They, who have never observed the gradation by which art is acquired; who see only what is the full result of long labour and application of an infinite number and infinite variety of acts, are apt to conclude, from their entire inability to do the same at once, that it is not only inaccessible to themselves, but can be done by those only who have some gift of the nature of inspiration bestowed upon them.

The travellers into the East tell us, that when the ignorant inhabitants of those countries are asked con-

cerning the ruins of stately edifices yet remaining amongst them, the melancholy monuments of their former grandeur and long-lost science, they always answer, that they were built by magicians. The untaught mind finds a vast gulf between its own powers and those works of complicated art, which it is utterly unable to fathom; and it supposes that such a void can be passed only by supernatural powers.

And, as for artists themselves, it is by no means their interest to undeceive such judges, however conscious they may be of the very natural means by which their extraordinary powers were acquired: though our art, being intrinsically imitative, rejects this idea of inspiration, more perhaps than any other.

It is to avoid this plain confession of truth, as it should seem, that this imitation of masters, indeed almost all imitation, which implies a more regular and progressive method of attaining the ends of painting, has ever been particularly inveighed against with great keenness, both by ancient and modern writers.

To derive all from native power, to owe nothing to another, is the praise which men, who do not much think on what they are saying, bestow sometimes upon others, and sometimes on themselves; and their imaginary dignity is naturally heightened by a supercilious censure of the low, the barren, the groveling, the servile imitator. It would be no wonder if a student, frightened by these terrific and disgraceful epithets, with which the poor imitators are so often loaded, should let fall his pencil in mere despair; (conscious as he must be, how much he has been indebted to the labours of others, how little, how very little of his art was born with him;) and consider it as hopeless, to set about acquiring by the imitation of

any human master, what he is taught to suppose is matter of inspiration from heaven.

Some allowance must be made for what is said in the gaiety of rhetoric. We cannot suppose that any one can really mean to exclude all imitation of others. A position so wild would scarce deserve a serious answer; for it is apparent, if we were forbid to make use of the advantages which our predecessors afford us, the art would be always to begin, and consequently remain always in its infant state; and it is a common observation, that no art was ever invented and carried to perfection at the same time.

But to bring us entirely to reason and sobriety, let it be observed, that a painter must not only be of necessity an imitator of the works of nature, which alone is sufficient to dispel this phantom of inspiration, but he must be as necessarily an imitator of the works of other painters: this appears more humiliating, but is equally true; and no man can be an artist, whatever he may suppose, upon any other terms.

However, those who appear more moderate and reasonable, allow, that our study is to begin by imitation; but maintain that we should no longer use the thoughts of our predecessors, when we are become able to think for ourselves. They hold that imitation is as hurtful to the more advanced student, as it was advantageous to the beginner.

For my own part, I confess, I am not only very much disposed to maintain the absolute necessity of imitation in the first stages of the art; but am of opinion, that the study of other masters, which I here call imitation, may be extended throughout our whole lives, without any danger of the inconveniences with which it is charged, of enfeebling the mind, or pre-

venting us from giving that original air which every work undoubtedly ought always to have.

I am on the contrary persuaded that by imitation only, variety, and even originality of invention, is produced. I will go further; even genius, at least what generally is so called, is the child of imitation. But as this appears to be contrary to the general opinion, I must explain my position before I enforce it.

Genius is supposed to be a power of producing excellencies, which are out of the reach of the rules of art; a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire.

This opinion of the impossibility of acquiring those beauties, which stamp the work with the character of genius, supposes that it is something more fixed, than in reality it is; and that we always do, and ever did agree in opinion, with respect to what should be considered as the characteristic of genius. But the truth is, that the *degree* of excellence which proclaims *Genius* is different, in different times and different places; and what shows it to be so is, that mankind have often changed their opinion upon this matter.

When the Arts were in their infancy, the power of merely drawing the likeness of any object, was considered as one of its greatest efforts. The common people, ignorant of the principles of art, talk the same language even to this day. But when it was found that every man could be taught to do this, and a great deal more, merely by the observance of certain precepts; the name of Genius then shifted its application, and was given only to him who added the peculiar character of the object he represented; to him who had invention, expression, grace, or dignity; in short, those qualities, or excellencies, the power of pro-

ducing which, could not *then* be taught by any known and promulgated rules.

We are very sure that the beauty of form, the expression of the passions, the art of composition, even the power of giving a general air of grandeur to a work, is at present very much under the dominion of rules. These excellencies were, heretofore, considered merely as the effects of genius; and justly, if genius is not taken for inspiration, but as the effect of close observation and experience.

He who first made any of these observations, and digested them, so as to form an invariable principle for himself to work by, had that merit, but probably no one went very far at once; and generally, the first who gave the hint, did not know how to pursue it steadily and methodically; at least not in the beginning. He himself worked on it, and improved it; others worked more, and improved further; until the secret was discovered, and the practice made as general, as refined practice can be made. How many more principles may be fixed and ascertained, we cannot tell; but as criticism is likely to go hand in hand with the art which is its subject, we may venture to say, that as that art shall advance, its powers will be still more and more fixed by rules.

But by whatever strides criticism may gain ground, we need be under no apprehension, that invention will ever be annihilated, or subdued; or intellectual energy be brought entirely within the restraint of written law. Genius will still have room enough to expatiate, and keep always at the same distance from narrow comprehension and mechanical performance.

What we now call Genius, begins, not where rules, abstractedly taken, end; but where known vulgar and trite rules have no longer any place. It must of ne-

cessity be, that even works of Genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules: it cannot be by chance, that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and such as are called men of Genius, work, are either such as they discover by their own peculiar observations, or of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words; especially as artists are not very frequently skilful in that mode of communicating ideas. Unsubstantial, however, as these rules may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist; and he works from them with as much certainty, as if they were embodied, as I may say, upon paper. It is true, these refined principles cannot be always made palpable, like the more gross rules of art; yet it does not follow, but that the mind may be put in such a train, that it shall perceive, by a kind of scientific sense, that propriety, which words, particularly words of unpractised writers, such as we are, can but very feebly suggest.

Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find, that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others, that we learn to invent; as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think.

Whoever has so far formed his taste, as to be able to relish and feel the beauties of the great masters, has gone a great way in his study; for, merely from a consciousness of this relish of the right, the mind swells with an inward pride, and is almost as powerfully affected, as if it had itself produced what it admires. Our hearts, frequently warmed in this manner

by the contact of those whom we wish to resemble, will undoubtedly catch something of their way of thinking; and we shall receive in our own bosoms some radiation at least of their fire and splendour. That disposition, which is so strong in children, still continues with us, of catching involuntarily the general air and manner of those with whom we are most conversant; with this difference only, that a young mind is naturally pliable and imitative; but in a more advanced state it grows rigid, and must be warmed and softened, before it will receive a deep impression.

From these considerations, which a little of your own reflection will carry a great way further, it appears, of what great consequence it is, that our minds should be habituated to the contemplation of excellence; and that, far from being contented to make such habits the discipline of our youth only, we should, to the last moment of our lives, continue a settled intercourse with all the true examples of grandeur. Their inventions are not only the food of our infancy, but the substance which supplies the fullest maturity of our vigour.

The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.

When we have had continually before us the great works of Art to impregnate our minds with kindred ideas, we are then, and not till then, fit to produce something of the same species. We behold all about us with the eyes of those penetrating observers whose works we contemplate; and our minds, accustomed to think the thoughts of the noblest and brightest intellects, are prepared for the discovery and selection of all that is great and noble in nature. The greatest

natural genius cannot subsist on its own stock: he who resolves never to ransack any mind but his own, will be soon reduced, from mere barrenness, to the poorest of all imitations; he will be obliged to imitate himself, and to repeat what he has before often repeated. When we know the subject designed by such men, it will never be difficult to guess what kind of work is to be produced.

It is vain for painters or poets to endeavour to invent without materials on which the mind may work, and from which invention must originate. Nothing can come of nothing.

Homer is supposed to be possessed of all the learning of his time; and we are certain that Michael Angelo, and Raffaelle, were equally possessed of all the knowledge in the art which had been discovered in the works of their predecessors.

A mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern art, will be more elevated and fruitful in resources, in proportion to the number of ideas which have been carefully collected and thoroughly digested. There can be no doubt but that he who has the most materials has the greatest means of invention; and if he has not the power of using them, it must proceed from a feebleness of intellect; or from the confused manner in which those collections have been laid up in his mind.

The addition of other men's judgment is so far from weakening our own, as is the opinion of many, that it will fashion and consolidate those ideas of excellence which lay in embryo, feeble, ill-shaped, and confused, but which are finished and put in order by the authority and practice of those whose works may be said to have been consecrated by having stood the test of ages.

The mind, or genius, has been compared to a spark of fire, which is smothered by a heap of fuel, and prevented from blazing into a flame: This simile, which is made use of by the younger Pliny, may be easily mistaken for argument or proof. But there is no danger of the mind's being over-burthened with knowledge, or the genius extinguished by any addition of images; on the contrary, these acquisitions may as well, perhaps better, be compared, if comparisons signified any thing in reasoning, to the supply of living embers, which will contribute to strengthen the spark, that without the association of more fuel would have died away. The truth is, he whose feebleness is such, as to make other men's thoughts an incumbrance to him, can have no very great strength of mind or genius of his own to be destroyed; so that not much harm will be done at worst.

We may oppose to Pliny the greater authority of Cicero, who is continually enforcing the necessity of this method of study. In his dialogue on Oratory, he makes Crassus say, that one of the first and most important precepts is, to choose a proper model for our imitation. *Hoc sit primum in præceptis meis, ut demonstremus quem imitemur.*

When I speak of the habitual imitation and continued study of masters, it is not to be understood that I advise any endeavour to copy the exact peculiar colour and complexion of another man's mind; the success of such an attempt must always be like his, who imitates exactly the air, manner, and gestures of him whom he admires. His model may be excellent, but the copy will be ridiculous: this ridicule does not arise from his having imitated, but from his not having chosen the right mode of imitation.

It is a necessary and warrantable pride to disdain to

walk servilely behind any individual, however elevated his rank. The true and liberal ground of imitation is an open field; where, though he who precedes has had the advantage of starting before you, you may always propose to overtake him: it is enough, however, to pursue his course; you need not tread in his footsteps, and you certainly have a right to outstrip him if you can.

Nor whilst I recommend studying the art from artists, can I be supposed to mean that nature is to be neglected: I take this study in aid, and not in exclusion of the other. Nature is and must be the fountain which alone is inexhaustible, and from which all excellencies must originally flow.

The great use of studying our predecessors is, to open the mind, to shorten our labour, and to give us the result of the selection made by those great minds of what is grand or beautiful in nature; her rich stores are all spread out before us; but it is an art, and no easy art, to know how or what to choose, and how to attain and secure the object of our choice. Thus the highest beauty of form must be taken from nature; but it is an art of long deduction and great experience to know how to find it. We must not content ourselves with merely admiring and relishing; we must enter into the principles on which the work is wrought: these do not swim on the superficies, and consequently are not open to superficial observers.

Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid and works its effect, itself unseen. It is the proper study and labour of an artist to uncover and find out the latent cause of conspicuous beauties, and from thence form principles of his own conduct; such an examination is a continual exertion of the mind; as

great, perhaps, as that of the artist whose works he is thus studying.

The sagacious imitator does not content himself with merely remarking what distinguishes the different manner or genius of each master; he enters into the contrivance in the composition how the masses of lights are disposed, the means by which the effect is produced, how artfully some parts are lost in the ground, others boldly relieved, and how all these are mutually altered and interchanged according to the reason and scheme of the work. He admires not the harmony of colouring alone, but examines by what artifice one colour is a foil to its neighbour. He looks close into the tints, examines of what colours they are composed, till he has formed clear and distinct ideas, and has learnt to see in what harmony and good colouring consists. What is learnt in this manner from the works of others becomes really our own, sinks deep, and is never forgotten; nay, it is by seizing on this clue that we proceed forward, and get further and further in enlarging the principles and improving the practice of our art.

There can be no doubt but the art is better learnt from the works themselves, than from the precepts which are formed upon those works; but if it is difficult to choose proper models for imitation, it requires no less circumspection to separate and distinguish what in those models we ought to imitate.

I cannot avoid mentioning here, though it is not my intention at present to enter into the art and method of study, an error which sudents are too apt to fall into. He that is forming himself, must look with great caution and wariness on those peculiarities, or prominent parts, which at first force themselves upon view; and

are the marks, or what is commonly called the manner, by which that individual artist is distinguished.

Peculiar marks I hold to be, generally, if not always, defects; however difficult it may be wholly to escape them.

Peculiarities in the works of art are like those in the human figure; it is by them that we are cognisable, and distinguished one from another, but they are always so many blemishes; which, however, both in real life and in painting, cease to appear deformities, to those who have them continually before their eyes. In the works of art, even the most enlightened mind, when warmed by beauties of the highest kind, will by degrees find a repugnance within him to acknowledge any defects; nay, his enthusiasm will carry him so far, as to transform them into beauties and objects of imitation.

It must be acknowledged that a peculiarity of style, either from its novelty or by seeming to proceed from a peculiar turn of mind, often escapes blame; on the contrary, it is sometimes striking and pleasing; but this it is a vain labour to endeavour to imitate, because novelty and peculiarity being its only merit, when it ceases to be new it ceases to have value.

A manner, therefore, being a defect, and every painter, however excellent, having a manner, it seems to follow that all kinds of faults, as well as beauties, may be learned under the sanction of the greatest authorities. Even the great name of Michael Angelo may be used, to keep in countenance a deficiency, or rather neglect, of colouring, and every other ornamental part of the art. If the young student is dry and hard, Poussin is the same. If his work has a careless and unfinished air, he has most of the Venetian school to support him. If he makes no selection of

objects, but takes individual nature just as he finds it, he is like Rembrandt. If he is incorrect in the proportions of his figures, Correggio was likewise incorrect. If his colours are not blended and united, Rubens was equally crude. In short, there is no defect that may not be excused, if it is a sufficient excuse that it can be imputed to considerable artists; but it must be remembered, that it was not by these defects they acquired their reputation; they have a right to our pardon, but not to our admiration.

However, to imitate peculiarities, or mistake defects for beauties, that man will be most liable, who confines his imitation to one favourite master; and even though he chooses the best, and is capable of distinguishing the real excellencies of his model, it is not by such narrow practice that a genius or mastery in the art is acquired. A man is as little likely to form a true idea of the perfection of the art by studying a single artist, as he would be to produce a perfectly beautiful figure, by an exact imitation of any individual living model. And as the painter, by bringing together in one piece those beauties which are dispersed among a great variety of individuals, produces a figure more beautiful than can be found in nature, so that artist who can unite in himself the excellencies of the various great painters, will approach nearer to perfection than any one of his masters. He who confines himself to the imitation of an individual, as he never proposes to surpass, so he is not likely to equal, the object of his imitation. He professes only to follow; and he that follows must necessarily be behind.

We should imitate the conduct of the great artists in the course of their studies, as well as the works which they produced, when they were perfectly formed. Raffaelle began by imitating implicitly the manner of

Pietro Perugino, under whom he studied; hence his first works are scarce to be distinguished from his master's; but soon forming higher and more extensive views, he imitated the grand outline of Michael Angelo; he learned the manner of using colours from the works of Leonardo da Vinci, and Fratre Bartolomeo: to all this he added the contemplation of all the remains of antiquity that were within his reach, and employed others to draw for him what was in Greece and distant places. And it is from his having taken so many models, that he became himself a model for all succeeding painters; always imitating, and always original.

If your ambition, therefore, be to equal Raffaelle, you must do as Raffaelle did, take many models, and not even *him* for your guide alone, to the exclusion of others.* And yet the number is infinite of those who seem, if one may judge by their style, to have seen no other works but those of their master, or of some favourite, whose *manner* is their first wish, and their last.

I will mention a few that occur to me of this narrow, confined, illiberal, unscientific, and servile kind of imitators. Guido was thus meanly copied by Elizabetta Sirani, and Simone Cantarini; Poussin, by Verdier, and Cheron; Parmeggiano, by Jeronimo Mazzuoli. Paolo Veronese, and Iacomo Bassan, had for their imitators their brothers and sons. Pietro da Cortona was followed by Ciro Ferri, and Romanelli; Rubens, by Jacques Jordaens, and Diepenbeke; Guercino, by his own family, the Gennari. Carlo Maratti was imitated by Giuseppe Chiari, and Pietro de Pietri; and Rembrandt, by Bramer, Eeckhout, and Flink. All these,

* Sed non qui maxime imitandus, etiam solus imitandus est. Quintilian.

to whom may be added a much longer list of painters, whose works among the ignorant pass for those of their masters, are justly to be censured for barrenness and servility.

To oppose to this list a few that have adopted a more liberal style of imitation; — Pellegrino Tibaldi Rosso, and Primaticcio, did not coldly imitate, but caught something of the fire that animates the works of Michael Angelo. The Caraccis formed their style from Pellegrino Tibaldi, Correggio, and the Venetian school. Domenichino, Guido, Lanfranco, Albano, Guercino, Cavidone, Schidone, Tiarini, though it is sufficiently apparent that they came from the school of the Caraccis, have yet the appearance of men who extended their views beyond the model that lay before them, and have shown that they had opinions of their own, and thought for themselves, after they had made themselves masters of the general principles of their schools.

Le Suer's first manner resembles very much that of his master Voüet; but as he soon excelled him, so he differed from him in every part of the art. Carlo Maratti succeeded better than those I have first named, and I think owes his superiority to the extension of his views; beside his master Andrea Sacchi, he imitated Raffaelle, Guido, and the Caraccis. It is true, there is nothing very captivating in Carlo Maratti; but this proceeded from a want which cannot be completely supplied; that is, want of strength of parts. In this certainly men are not equal; and a man can bring home wares only in proportion to the capital with which he goes to market. Carlo, by diligence, made the most of what he had; but there was undoubtedly a heaviness about him, which extended itself, uniformly, to his invention, expression, his drawing, colouring, and the general effect of his pictures. The

truth is, he never equalled any of his patterns in any one thing, and he added little of his own.

But we must not rest contented even in this general study of the moderns; we must trace back the art to its fountain-head; to that source from whence they drew their principal excellencies, the monuments of pure antiquity. All the inventions and thoughts of the ancients, whether conveyed to us in statues, bas-reliefs, intaglios, cameos, or coins, are to be sought after and carefully studied; the genius that hovers over these venerable relics may be called the father of modern art.

From the remains of the works of the ancients the modern arts were revived, and it is by their means that they must be restored a second time. However it may mortify our vanity, we must be forced to allow them our masters: and we may venture to prophesy, that when they shall cease to be studied, arts will no longer flourish, and we shall again relapse into barbarism.

The fire of the artist's own genius operating upon these materials which have been thus diligently collected, will enable him to make new combinations, perhaps, superior to what had ever before been in the possession of the art; as in the mixture of the variety of metals, which are said to have been melted and run together at the burning of Corinth, a new and till then unknown metal was produced, equal in value to any of those that had contributed to its composition. And though a curious refiner should come with his crucibles, analyse and separate its various component parts, yet Corinthian brass would still hold its rank amongst the most beautiful and valuable of metals.

We have hitherto considered the advantages of imitation as it tends to form the taste, and as a practice

by which a spark of that genius may be caught, which illumines those noble works that ought always to be present to our thoughts.

We come now to speak of another kind of imitation; the borrowing a particular thought, an action, attitude, or figure, and transplanting it into your own work, this will either come under the charge of plagiarism, or be warrantable, and deserve commendation, according to the address with which it is performed. There is some difference, likewise, whether it is upon the ancients or moderns that these depredations are made. It is generally allowed, that no man need be ashamed of copying the ancients; their works are considered as a magazine of common property, always open to the public, whence every man has a right to take what materials he pleases; and if he has the art of using them, they are supposed to become to all intents and purposes his own property. The collection of the thoughts of the ancients which Raffaelle made with so much trouble, is a proof of his opinion on this subject. Such collections may be made with much more ease, by means of an art scarce known in this time; I mean that of engraving; by which, at an easy rate, every man may now avail himself of the inventions of antiquity.

It must be acknowledged that the works of the moderns are more the property of their authors. He who borrows an idea from an ancient, or even from a modern artist not his contemporary, and so accommodates it to his own work, that it makes a part of it, with no seam or joining appearing, can hardly be charged with plagiarism; poets practise this kind of borrowing, without reserve. But an artist should not be contented with this only; he should enter into a competition with his original, and endeavour to improve what he is appropriating to his own work. Such

imitation is so far from having any thing in it of the servility of plagiarism, that it is a perpetual exercise of the mind, a continual invention. Borrowing or stealing with such art and caution, will have a right to the same lenity as was used by the Lacedemonians; who did not punish theft, but the want of artifice to conceal it.

In order to encourage you to imitation, to the utmost extent, let me add, that very finished artists in the inferior branches of the art, will contribute to furnish the mind and give hints, of which a skilful painter, who is sensible of what he wants, and is in no danger of being infected by the contract of vicious models, will know how to avail himself. He will pick up from dunghills what, by a nice chemistry, passing through his own mind, shall be converted into pure gold; and under the rudeness of Gothic essays, he will find original, rational, and even sublime inventions.

The works of Albert Durer, Lucas Van Leyden, the numerous inventions of Tobias Stimmer, and Jost Ammon, afford a rich mass of genuine materials, which, wrought up and polished to elegance, will add copiousness to what, perhaps, without such aid, could have aspired only to justness and propriety.

In the luxuriant style of Paul Veronese, in the capricious compositions of Tintoret, he will find something, that will assist his invention, and give points, from which his own imagination shall rise and take flight, when the subject which he treats will with propriety admit of splendid effects.

In every school, whether Venetian, French, or Dutch, he will find either ingenious compositions, extraordinary effects, some peculiar expressions, or some mechanical excellence, well worthy of his attention, and, in some measure, of his imitation. Even in the

lower class of the French painters, great beauties are often found, united with great defects. Though Coypel wanted a simplicity of taste, and mistook a presumptuous and assuming air, for what is grand and majestic; yet he frequently has good sense and judgment in his manner of telling his stories, great skill in his compositions, and is not without a considerable power of expressing the passions. The modern affectation of grace in his works, as well as in those of Bosch and Watteau, may be said to be separated by a very thin partition, from the more simple and pure grace of Correggio and Parmegiano.

Among the Dutch painters, the correct, firm, and determined pencil, which was employed by Bamboccio and Jean Miel, on vulgar and mean subjects, might, without any change, be employed on the highest; to which, indeed, it seems more properly to belong. The greatest style, if that style is confined to small figures, such as Poussin generally painted, would receive an additional grace by the elegance and precision of pencil so admirable in the works of Teniers; and though the school to which he belonged more particularly excelled in the mechanism of painting; yet it produced many, who have shown great abilities in expressing what must be ranked above mechanical excellencies. In the works of Frank Hals, the portrait-painter may observe the composition of a face, the features well put together, as the painters express it; from whence proceeds that strong-marked character of individual nature, which is so remarkable in his portraits, and is not found in an equal degree in any other painter. If he had joined to this most difficult part of the art, a patience in finishing what he had so correctly planned, he might justly have claimed the place which Vandyke,

all things considered, so justly holds as the first of portrait-painters.

Others of the same school have shown great power in expressing the character and passions of those vulgar people which were the subjects of their study and attention. Among those, Jan Steen seems to be one of the most diligent and accurate observers of what passed in those scenes which he frequented, and which were to him an academy. I can easily imagine, that if this extraordinary man had had the good fortune to have been born in Italy, instead of Holland; had he lived in Rome, instead of Leyden; and been blessed with Michael Angelo and Raffaelle for his masters, instead of Brouwer and Van Goyen; the same sagacity and penetration which distinguished so accurately the different characters and expression in his vulgar figures, would, when exerted in the selection and imitation of what was great and elevated in nature, have been equally successful; and he now would have ranged with the great pillars and supporters of our Art.

Men who, although thus bound down by the almost invincible powers of early habits, have still exerted extraordinary abilities within their narrow and confined circle; and have, from the natural vigour of their mind, given a very interesting expression, and great force and energy to their works; though they cannot be recommended to be exactly imitated, may yet invite an artist to endeavour to transfer, by a kind of parody, their excellencies to his own performances. Whoever has acquired the power of making this use of the Flemish, Venetian, and French schools, is a real genius, and has sources of knowledge open to him which were wanting to the great artists who lived in the great age of painting.

To find excellencies, however dispersed; to discover

beauties, however concealed by the multitude of defects with which they are surrounded, can be the work only of him, who having a mind always alive to his art, has extended his views to all ages and to all schools; and has acquired from that comprehensive mass which he has thus gathered to himself, a well-digested and perfect idea of his art, to which every thing is referred. Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both from what is great, and what is little; brings home knowledge from the East and from the West; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind, and enriching his works with originality and variety of inventions.

Thus I have ventured to give my opinion of what appears to me the true and only method by which an artist makes himself master of his profession; which I hold ought to be one continued course of imitation, that is not to cease but with his life.

Those, who either from their own engagements and hurry of business, or from indolence, or from conceit and vanity, have neglected looking out of themselves, as far as my experience and observation reaches, have from that time, not only ceased to advance, and improve in their performances, but have gone backward. They may be compared to men who have lived upon their principal, till they are reduced to beggary, and left without resources.

I canr ecommend nothing better therefore, than that you endeavour to infuse into your works what you learn from the contemplation of the works of others. To recommend this has the appearance of needless and superfluous advice; but it has fallen within my own knowledge, that artists, though they were not wanting in a

sincere love for their art, though they had great pleasure in seeing good pictures, and were well skilled to distinguish what was excellent or defective in them, yet have gone on in their own manner, without any endeavour to give a little of those beauties, which they admired in others, to their own works. It is difficult to conceive how the present Italian painters, who live in the midst of the treasures of art, should be contented with their own style. They proceed in their common-place inventions, and never think it worth while to visit the works of those great artists with which they are surrounded.

I remember, several years ago, to have conversed at Rome with an artist of great fame throughout Europe; he was not without a considerable degree of abilities, but those abilities were by no means equal to his own opinion of them. From the reputation he had acquired, he too fondly concluded that he stood in the same rank when compared with his predecessors, as he held with regard to his miserable contemporary rivals. In conversation about some particulars of the works of Raffaelle, he seemed to have, or to affect to have, a very obscure memory of them. He told me that he had not set his foot in the Vatican for fifteen years together; that he had been in treaty to copy a capital picture of Raffaelle, but that the business had gone off; however, if the agreement had held, his copy would have greatly exceeded the original. The merit of this artist, however great we may suppose it, I am sure would have been far greater, and his presumption would have been far less, if he had visited the Vatican, as in reason he ought to have done, at least once every month of his life.

I address myself, Gentlemen, to you who have made some progress in the art, and are to be, for the future,

under the guidance of your own judgment and discretion. I consider you as arrived to that period, when you have a right to think for yourselves, and to presume that every man is fallible; to study the masters with a suspicion, that great men are not always exempt from great faults; to criticise, compare, and rank their works in your own estimation, as they approach to, or recede from that standard of perfection which you have formed in your own minds, but which those masters themselves, it must remembered, have taught you to make, and which you will cease to make with correctness, when you cease to study them. It is their excellencies which have taught you their defects.

I would wish you to forget where you are, and who it is that speaks to you, I only direct you to higher models and better advisers. We can teach you here but very little; you are henceforth to be your own teachers. Do this justice, however, to the English Academy; to bear in mind, that in this place you contracted no narrow habits, no false ideas, nothing that could lead you to the imitation of any living master, who may be the fashionable darling of the day. As you have not been taught to flatter us, do not learn to flatter yourselves. We have endeavoured to lead you to the admiration of nothing but what is truly admirable. If you choose inferior patterns, or if you make your own *former* works your patterns for your *latter*, it is your own fault.

The purport of this discourse, and, indeed, of most of my other discourses, is, to caution you against that false opinion, but too prevalent among artists, of the imaginary powers of native genius, and its sufficiency in great works. This opinion, according to the temper of mind it meets with, almost always produces,

either a vain confidence, or a sluggish despair, both equally fatal to all proficiency.

Study, therefore, the great works of the great masters, for ever. Study, as nearly as you can, in the order, in the manner, and on the principles, on which they studied. Study nature attentively, but always with those masters in your company; consider them as models which you are to imitate, and at the same time as rivals with whom you are to contend.

DISCOURSE VII.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 10. 1776.

THE REALITY OF A STANDARD OF TASTE, AS WELL AS OF CORPORAL BEAUTY.—BESIDE THIS IMMUTABLE TRUTH, THERE ARE SECONDARY TRUTHS, WHICH ARE VARIABLE; BOTH REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF THE ARTIST, IN PROPORTION TO THEIR STABILITY OR THEIR INFLUENCE.

GENTLEMEN,

IT has been my uniform endeavour, since I first addressed you from this place, to impress you strongly with one ruling idea. I wished you to be persuaded, that success in your art depends almost entirely on your own industry; but the industry which I principally recommended, is not the industry of the *hands*, but of the *mind*.

As our art is not a divine *gift*, so neither is it a mechanical *trade*. Its foundations are laid in solid science; and practice, though essential to perfection, can never attain that to which it aims, unless it works under the direction of principle.

Some writers upon art carry this point too far, and suppose that such a body of universal and profound learning is requisite, that the very enumeration of its kinds is enough to frighten a beginner. Vitruvius, after going through the many accomplishments of nature, and the many acquirements of learning, necessary to an architect, proceeds with great gravity to assert

that he ought to be well skilled in the civil law, that he may not be cheated in the title of the ground he builds on. But without such exaggeration, we may go so far as to assert, that a painter stands in need of more knowledge than is to be picked off his pallet, or collected by looking on his model, whether it be in life or in picture. He can never be a great artist who is grossly illiterate.

Every man whose business is description, ought to be tolerably conversant with the poets, in some language or other; that he may imbibe a poetical spirit, and enlarge his stock of ideas. He ought to acquire an habit of comparing and digesting his notions. He ought not to be wholly unacquainted with that part of philosophy which gives an insight into human nature, and relates to the manners, characters, passions, and affections. He ought to know *something* concerning the mind, as well as *a great deal* concerning the body of man. For this purpose, it is not necessary that he should go into such a compass of reading, as must, by distracting his attention, disqualify him for the practical part of his profession, and make him sink the performer in the critic. Reading, if it can be made the favourite recreation of his leisure hours, will improve and enlarge his mind, without retarding his actual industry. What such partial and desultory reading cannot afford, may be supplied by the conversation of learned and ingenious men, which is the best of all substitutes for those who have not the means or opportunities of deep study. There are many such men in this age; and they will be pleased with communicating their ideas to artists, when they see them curious and docile, if they are treated with that respect and deference which is so justly their due. Into such

society, young artists, if they make it the point of their ambition, will, by degrees, be admitted. There, without formal teaching, they will insensibly come to feel and reason like those they live with, and find a rational and systematic taste imperceptibly formed in their minds, which they will know how to reduce to a standard, by applying general truth to their own purposes, better, perhaps, than those to whom they owned the original sentiment.

Of these studies, and this conversation, the desire and legitimate offspring, is a power of distinguishing right from wrong; which power applied to works of art, is denominated TASTE. Let me then, without further introduction, enter upon an examination, whether taste be so far beyond our reach, as to be unattainable by care; or be so very vague and capricious, that no care ought to be employed about it.

It has been the fate of arts to be enveloped in mysrious and incomprehensible language, as if it was thought necessary that even the terms should correspond to the idea entertained of the instability and uncertainty of the rules which they expressed.

To speak of genius and taste, as in any way connected with reason or common sense, would be, in the opinion of some towering talkers, to speak like a man who possessed neither; who had never felt that enthusiasm, or, to use their own inflated language, was never warmed by that Promethean fire, which animates the canvass and vivifies the marble.

If, in order to be intelligible, I appear to degrade art by bringing her down from her visionary situation in the clouds, it is only to give her a more solid mansion upon the earth. It is necessary that at some time or other we should see things as they really are, and not impose on ourselves by that false magnitude

with which objects appear when viewed indistinctly as through a mist.

We will allow a poet to express his meaning, when his meaning is not well known to himself, with a certain degree of obscurity, as it is one source of the sublime. But when, in plain prose, we gravely talk of courting the Muse in shady bowers; waiting the call and inspiration of Genius, finding out where he inhabits, and where he is to be invoked with the greatest success; of attending to times and seasons when the imagination shoots with the greatest vigour, whether at the summer solstice or the vernal equinox; sagaciously observing how much the wild freedom and liberty of imagination is cramped by attention to established rules; and how this same imagination begins to grow dim in advanced age, smothered and deadened by too much judgment; when we talk such language, or entertain such sentiments as these, we generally rest contented with mere words, or at best entertain notions not only groundless but pernicious.

If all this means, what it is very possible was originally intended only to be meant, that in order to cultivate an art, a man secludes himself from the commerce of the world, and retires into the country at particular seasons: or that at one time of the year his body is in better health, and consequently his mind fitter for the business of hard thinking than at another time; or that the mind may be fatigued and grow confused by long and unremitted application; this I can understand. I can likewise believe, that a man eminent when young for possessing poetical imagination, may, from having taken another road, so neglect its cultivation, as to show less of its powers in his latter life. But I am persuaded, that scarce a poet is to be found, from Homer down to Dryden, who preserved a sound

mind in a sound body, and continued practising his profession to the very last, whose latter works are not as replete with the fire of imagination, as those which were produced in his more youthful days.

To understand literally these metaphors, or ideas expressed in poetical language, seems to be equally absurd as to conclude, that because painters sometimes represent poets writing from the dictates of a little winged boy or genius, that this same genius did really inform him in a whisper what he was to write; and that he is himself but a mere machine, unconscious of the operations of his own mind.

Opinions generally received and floating in the world, whether true or false, we naturally adopt and make our own: they may be considered as a kind of inheritance to which we succeed and are tenants for life, and which we leave to our posterity very nearly in the condition in which we received it; it not being much in any one man's power either to impair or improve it. The greatest part of these opinions, like current coin in its circulation, we are used to take without weighing or examining; but by this inevitable inattention many adulterated pieces are received, which, when we seriously estimate our wealth, we must throw away. So the collector of popular opinions, when he embodies his knowledge, and forms a system, must separate those which are true from those which are only plausible. But it becomes more peculiarly a duty to the professors of art not to let any opinions relating to *that* art pass unexamined. The caution and circumspection required in such examination we shall presently have an opportunity of explaining.

Genius and taste, in their common acceptation, appear to be very nearly related; the difference lies only in this, that genius has superadded to it a habit or

power of execution; or we may say, that taste, when this power is added, changes its name, and is called genius. They both, in the popular opinion, pretend to an entire exemption from the restraint of rules. It is supposed that their powers are intuitive; that under the name of genius great works are produced, and under the name of taste an exact judgment is given, without our knowing why, and without our being under the least obligation to reason, precept, or experience.

One can scarce state these opinions without exposing their absurdity; yet they are constantly in the mouths of men, and particularly of artists. They who have thought seriously on this subject, do not carry the point so far; yet I am persuaded, that even among those few who may be called thinkers, the prevalent opinion allows less than it ought to the powers of reason; and considers the principles of taste, which give all their authority to the rules of art, as more fluctuating, and as having less solid foundations, than we shall find, upon examination, they really have.

The common saying, that *tastes are not to be disputed*, owes its influence, and its general reception, to the same error which leads us to imagine this faculty of too high an original to submit to the authority of an earthly tribunal. It likewise corresponds with the notions of those who consider it as a mere phantom of the imagination, so devoid of substance as to elude all criticism.

We often appear to differ in sentiments from each other, merely from the inaccuracy of terms, as we are not obliged to speak always with critical exactness. Something of this too may arise from want of words in the language in which we speak, to express the more nice discrimination which a deep investigation

discovers. A great deal, however, of this difference vanishes, when each opinion is tolerably explained and understood by constancy and precision in the use of terms.

We apply the term TASTE to that act of the mind by which we like or dislike, whatever be the subject. Our judgment upon an airy nothing, a fancy which has no foundation, is called by the same name which we give to our determination concerning those truths which refer to the most general and most unalterable principles of human nature; to the works which are only to be produced by the greatest efforts of the human understanding. However inconvenient this may be, we are obliged to take words as we find them; all we can do is to distinguish the THINGS to which they are applied.

We may let pass those things which are at once subjects of taste and sense, and which having as much certainty as the senses themselves, give no occasion to inquiry or dispute. The natural appetite or taste of the human mind is for TRUTH; whether that truth results from the real agreement or equality of original ideas among themselves; from the agreement of the representation of any object with the thing represented; or from the correspondence of the several parts of any arrangement with each other. It is the very same taste which relishes a demonstration in geometry, that is pleased with the resemblance of a picture to an original, and touched with the harmony of music.

All these have unalterable and fixed foundations in nature, and are therefore equally investigated by reason, and known by study; some with more, some with less clearness, but all exactly in the same way. A picture that is unlike, is false. Disproportionate ordonnance of parts is not right; because it cannot be true, until it ceases

to be a contradiction to assert, that the parts have no relation to the whole. Colouring is true, when it is naturally adapted to the eye, from brightness, from softness, from harmony, from resemblance; because these agree with their object, NATURE, and therefore are true; as true as mathematical demonstration; but known to be true only to those who study these things.

But beside real, there is also apparent truth, or opinion, or prejudice. With regard to real truth, when it is known; the taste which conforms to it is, and must be, uniform. With regard to the second sort of truth, which may be called truth upon sufferance, or truth by courtesy, it is not fixed, but variable. However, whilst these opinions and prejudices, on which it is founded, continue, they operate as truth; and the art, whose office it is to please the mind, as well as instruct it, must direct itself according to opinion, or it will not attain its end.

In proportion as these prejudices are known to be generally diffused, or long received, the taste which conforms to them approaches nearer to certainty, and to a sort of resemblance to real science, even where opinions are found to be no better than prejudices. And since they deserve, on account of their duration and extent, to be considered as really true, they become capable of no small degree of stability and determination, by their permanent and uniform nature.

As these prejudices become more narrow, more local, more transitory, this secondary taste becomes more and more fantastical; recedes from real science; is less to be approved by reason, and less followed in practice; though in no case perhaps to be wholly neglected, where it does not stand, as it sometimes does, in direct defiance of the most respectable opinions received amongst mankind.

Having laid down these positions, I shall proceed with less method, because less will serve to explain and apply them.

We will take it for granted, that reason is something invariable, and fixed in the nature of things; and without endeavouring to go back to an account of first principles, which for ever will elude our search, we will conclude, that whatever goes under the name of taste, which we can fairly bring under the dominion of reason, must be considered as equally exempt from change. If, therefore, in the course of this enquiry, we can show that there are rules for the conduct of the artist which are fixed and invariable, it follows of course, that the art of the connoisseur, or, in other words, taste, has likewise invariable principles.

Of the judgment which we make on the works of art, and the preference that we give to one class of art over another, if a reason be demanded, the question is perhaps evaded by answering, I judge from my taste; but it does not follow that a better answer cannot be given, though, for common gazers, this may be sufficient. Every man is not obliged to investigate the cause of his approbation or dislike.

The arts would lie open for ever to caprice and casualty, if those who are to judge of their excellencies had no settled principles by which they are to regulate their decisions, and the merit or defect of performances were to be determined by unguided fancy. And indeed we may venture to assert, that whatever speculative knowledge is necessary to the artist, is equally and indispensably necessary to the connoisseur.

The first idea that occurs in the consideration of what is fixed in art, or in taste, is that presiding principle of which I have so frequently spoken in former discourses, — the general idea of nature. The be-

ginning, the middle, and the end of every thing that is valuable in taste, is comprised in the knowledge of what is truly nature; for whatever notions are not conformable to those of nature, or universal opinion, must be considered as more or less capricious.

My notion of nature comprehends not only the forms which nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabric and organization, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination. The terms beauty, or nature, which are general ideas, are but different modes of expressing the same thing, whether we apply these terms to statues, poetry, or pictures. Deformity is not nature, but an accidental deviation from her accustomed practice. This general idea therefore ought to be called Nature; and nothing else, correctly speaking, has a right to that name. But we are so far from speaking, in common conversation, with any such accuracy, that, on the contrary, when we criticise Rembrandt and other Dutch painters, who introduced into their historical pictures exact representations of individual objects with all their imperfections, we say, — though it is not in a good taste, yet it is nature.

This misapplication of terms must be very often perplexing to the young student. Is not art, he may say, an imitation of nature? Must he not therefore who imitates her with the greatest fidelity be the best artist? By this mode of reasoning Rembrandt has a higher place than Raffaelle. But a very little reflection will serve to show us that these particularities cannot be nature: for how can that be the nature of man, in which no two individuals are the same?

It plainly appears, that as a work is conducted under the influence of general ideas, or partial, it is principally to be considered as the effect of a good or a bad taste.

As beauty therefore does not consist in taking what lies immediately before you, so neither, in our pursuit of taste, are those opinions which we first received and adopted, the best choice, or the most natural to the mind and imagination. In the infancy of our knowledge we seize with greediness the good that is within our reach; it is by after-consideration, and in consequence of discipline, that we refuse the present for a greater good at a distance. The nobility or elevation of all arts, like the excellency of virtue itself, consists in adopting this enlarged and comprehensive idea; and all criticism built upon the more confined view of what is natural, may properly be called *shallow* criticism, rather than false: its defect is, that the truth is not sufficiently extensive.

It has sometimes happened, that some of the greatest men in our art have been betrayed into errors by this confined mode of reasoning. Poussin, who, upon the whole, may be produced as an artist strictly attentive to the most enlarged and extensive ideas of nature, from not having settled principles on this point, has, in one instance, at least, I think, deserted truth for prejudice. He is said to have vindicated the conduct of Julio Romano for his inattention to the masses of light and shade, or grouping the figures in THE BATTLE OF CONSTANTINE, as if designedly neglected, the better to correspond with the hurry and confusion of a battle. Poussin's own conduct in many of his pictures, makes us more easily give credit to this report. That it was too much his own practice, THE SACRIFICE TO SILENUS, and THE TRIUMPH OF BACCHUS AND ARIADNE *, may be produced as instances; but this principle is still more apparent, and may be said to be

* In the Cabinet of the Earl of Ashburnham.

even more ostentatiously displayed in his PERSEUS and MEDUSA'S HEAD. *

This is undoubtedly a subject of great bustle and tumult, and that the first effect of the picture may correspond to the subject, every principle of composition is violated; there is no principal figure, no principal light, no groups; every thing is dispersed, and in such a state of confusion, that the eye finds no repose any where. In consequence of the forbidding appearance, I remember turning from it with disgust, and should not have looked a second time, if I had not been called back to a closer inspection. I then indeed found, what we may expect always to find in the works of Poussin, correct drawing, forcible expression, and just character; in short, all the excellencies which so much distinguish the works of this learned painter.

This conduct of Poussin I hold to be entirely improper to imitate. A picture should please at first sight, and appear to invite the spectator's attention: if, on the contrary, the general effect offends the eye, a second view is not always sought, whatever more substantial and intrinsic merit it may possess.

Perhaps no apology ought to be received for offences committed against the vehicle (whether it be the organ of seeing or of hearing,) by which our pleasures are conveyed to the mind. We must take care that the eye be not perplexed and distracted by a confusion of equal parts, or equal lights, or offended by an unharmonious mixture of colours, as we should guard against offending the ear by unharmonious sounds. We may venture to be more confident of the truth of this observation, since we find that Shakspeare, on a parallel occasion, has made Hamlet recommend to the

* In the Cabinet of Sir Peter Burrel.

players a precept of the same kind, — never to offend the ear by harsh sounds: *In the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of your passion,* says he, *you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.* And yet, at the same time, he very justly observes, *The end of playing, both at the first, and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature.* No one can deny, that violent passions will naturally emit harsh and disagreeable tones: yet this great poet and critic thought that this imitation of nature would cost too much, if purchased at the expence of disagreeable sensations, or, as he expresses it, of *splitting the ear.* The poet and actor, as well as the painter of genius, who is well acquainted with all the variety and sources of pleasure in the mind and imagination, has little regard or attention to common nature, or creeping after common sense. By overleaping those narrow bounds, he more effectually seizes the whole mind, and more powerfully accomplishes his purpose. This success is ignorantly imagined to proceed from inattention to all rules, and a defiance of reason and judgment; whereas it is in truth acting according to the best rules and the justest reason.

He who thinks nature, in the narrow sense of the word, is alone to be followed, will produce but a scanty entertainment for the imagination; every thing is to be done with which it is natural for the mind to be pleased, whether it proceeds from simplicity or variety, uniformity or irregularity; whether the scenes are familiar or exotic; rude and wild, or enriched and cultivated; for it is natural for the mind to be pleased with all these in their turn. In short, whatever pleases has in it what is analogous to the mind, and is, therefore, in the highest and best sense of the word, natural.

It is the sense of nature or truth, which ought more

particularly to be cultivated by the professors of art; and it may be observed, that many wise and learned men, who have accustomed their minds to admit nothing for truth but what can be proved by mathematical demonstration, have seldom any relish for those arts which address themselves to the fancy, the rectitude and truth of which is known by another kind of proof; and we may add, that the acquisition of this knowledge requires as much circumspection and sagacity as is necessary to attain those truths which are more capable of demonstration. Reason must ultimately determine our choice on every occasion; but this reason may still be exerted ineffectually by applying to taste principles which, though right as far as they go, yet do not reach the object. No man, for instance, can deny, that it seems at first view very reasonable, that a statue which is to carry down to posterity the resemblance of an individual, should be dressed in the fashion of the times, in the dress which he himself wore; this would certainly be true, if the dress were part of the man; but after a time, the dress is only an amusement for an antiquarian; and if it obstructs the general design of the piece, it is to be disregarded by the artist. Common sense must here give way to a higher sense. In the naked form, and in the disposition of the drapery, the difference between one artist and another is principally seen. But if he is compelled to exhibit the modern dress, the naked form is entirely hid, and the drapery is already disposed by the skill of the tailor. Were a Phidias to obey such absurd commands, he would please no more than an ordinary sculptor; in the inferior parts of every art, the learned and the ignorant are nearly upon a level.

These were probably among the reasons that in-

duced the sculptor of that wonderful figure of Laocoon to exhibit him naked, notwithstanding he was surprised in the act of sacrificing to Apollo, and consequently ought to have been shown in his sacerdotal habits, if those greater reasons had not preponderated. Art is not yet in so high estimation with us, as to obtain so great a sacrifice as the ancients made, especially the Grecians, who suffered themselves to be represented naked, whether they were generals, law-givers, or kings.

Under this head of balancing and choosing the greater reason, or of two evils taking the least, we may consider the conduct of Rubens in the Luxembourg gallery, where he has mixed allegorical figures with the representations of real personages, which must be acknowledged to be a fault; yet, if the artist considered himself as engaged to furnish this gallery with a rich, various, and splendid ornament, this could not be done, at least in an equal degree, without peopling the air and water with these allegorical figures; he therefore accomplished all that he purposed. In this case all lesser considerations, which tend to obstruct the great end of the work, must yield and give way.

The variety which portraits and modern dresses, mixed with allegorical figures, produce, is not to be slightly given up upon a punctilio of reason, when that reason deprives the art in a manner of its very existence. It must always be remembered that the business of a great painter is to produce a great picture; he must therefore take special care not to be cajoled by specious arguments out of his materials.

What has been so often said to the disadvantage of allegorical poetry,—that it is tedious, and uninteresting,—cannot with the same propriety be applied to painting, where the interest is of a different kind. If

allegorical painting produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished; such a picture not only attracts, but fixes the attention.

If it be objected that Rubens judged ill at first in thinking it necessary to make his work so very ornamental, this puts the question upon new ground. It was his peculiar style; he could paint in no other; and he was selected for that work, probably because it was his style. Nobody will dispute but some of the best of the Roman or Bolognian schools would have produced a more learned and more noble work.

This leads us to another important province of taste, that of weighing the value of the different classes of the art, and of estimating them accordingly.

All arts have means within them of applying themselves with success both to the intellectual and sensitive part of our natures. It cannot be disputed, supposing both these means put in practice with equal abilities, to which we ought to give the preference; to him who represents the heroic arts and more dignified passions of man, or to him who, by the help of meretricious ornaments, however elegant and graceful, captivates the sensuality, as it may be called, of our taste. Thus the Roman and Bolognian schools are reasonably preferred to the Venetian, Flemish, or Dutch schools, as they address themselves to our best and noblest faculties.

Well-turned periods in eloquence, or harmony of numbers in poetry, which are in those arts what colouring is in painting, however highly we may esteem them, can never be considered as of equal importance with the art of unfolding truths that are useful to man-

kind, and which make us better or wiser. Nor can those works which remind us of the poverty and meanness of our nature, be considered as of equal rank with what excites ideas of grandeur, or raises and dignifies humanity; or, in the words of a late poet, which makes the beholder *learn to venerate himself as man.**

It is reason and good sense, therefore, which ranks and estimates every art, and every part of that art, according to its importance, from the painter of animated, down to inanimated nature. We will not allow a man, who shall prefer the inferior style, to say it is his taste; taste here has nothing, or at least ought to have nothing, to do with the question. He wants not taste, but sense and soundness of judgment.

Indeed perfection in an inferior style may be reasonably preferred to mediocrity in the highest walks of art. A landscape of Claude Lorrain may be preferred to a history by Luca Giordano; but hence appears the necessity of the connoisseur's knowing in what consists the excellency of each class, in order to judge how near it approaches to perfection.

Even in works of the same kind, as in history-painting, which is composed of various parts, excellence of an inferior species, carried to a very high degree, will make a work very valuable, and in some measure compensate for the absence of the higher kinds of merit. It is the duty of the connoisseur to know and esteem, as much as it may deserve, every part of painting: he will not then think even Bassano unworthy of his notice; who, though totally devoid of expression, sense, grace, or elegance, may be esteemed on account of his admirable taste of colours, which, in his best works, are little inferior to those of Titian.

* Dr. Goldsmith.

Since I have mentioned Bassano, we must do him likewise the justice to acknowledge, that though he did not aspire to the dignity of expressing the characters and passions of men, yet, with respect to facility and truth in his manner of touching animals of all kinds, and giving them what painters call *their character*, few have excelled him.

To Bassano we may add Paul Veronese and Tintoret, for their entire inattention to what is justly thought the most essential part of our art, the expression of the passions. Notwithstanding these glaring deficiencies, we justly esteem their works; but it must be remembered, that they do not please from those defects, but from their great excellencies of another kind, and in spite of such transgressions. These excellencies, too, as far as they go, are founded in the truth of *general* nature: they tell the *truth*, though not *the whole truth*.

By these considerations, which can never be too frequently impressed, may be obviated two errors, which I observed to have been, formerly at least, the most prevalent, and to be most injurious to artists; that of thinking taste and genius to have nothing to do with reason, and that of taking particular living objects for nature.

I shall now say something on that part of *taste*, which as I have hinted to you before, does not belong so much to the external form of things, but is addressed to the mind, and depends on its original frame, or, to use the expression, the organisation of the soul; I mean the imagination and the passions. The principles of these are as invariable as the former, and are to be known and reasoned upon in the same manner, by an appeal to common sense deciding upon the common feelings of mankind. This sense, and these

feelings appear to me of equal authority, and equally conclusive. Now this appeal implies a general uniformity and agreement in the minds of men. It would be else an idle and vain endeavour to establish rules of art; it would be pursuing a phantom, to attempt to move affections with which we were entirely unacquainted. We have no reason to suspect there is a greater difference between our minds than between our forms; of which, though there are no two alike, yet there is a general similitude that goes through the whole race of mankind; and those who have cultivated their taste, can distinguishwhat is beautiful or deformed, or, in other words, what agrees with or deviates from the general idea of nature, in one case, as well as in the other.

The internal fabric of our minds, as well as the external form of our bodies, being nearly uniform; it seems then to follow of course, that as the imagination is incapable of producing any thing originally of itself, and can only vary and combine those ideas with which it is furnished by means of the senses, there will be necessarily an agreement in the imaginations, as in the senses of men. There being this agreement, it follows, that in all cases, in our lightest amusements, as well as in our most serious actions and engagements of life, we must regulate our affections of every kind by that of others. The well-disciplined mind acknowledges this authority, and submits its own opinion to the public voice. It is from knowing what are the general feelings and passions of mankind, that we acquire a true idea of what imagination is; though it appears as if we had nothing to do but to consult our own particular sensations, and these were sufficient to ensure us from all error and mistake.

A knowledge of the disposition and character of

the human mind can be acquired only by experience: a great deal will be learned, I admit, by a habit of examining what passes in our bosoms, what are our own motives of action, and of what kind of sentiments we are conscious on any occasion. We may suppose an uniformity, and conclude that the same effect will be produced by the same cause in the minds of others. This examination will contribute to suggest to us matters of inquiry; but we can never be sure that our own sentiments are true and right, till they are confirmed by more extensive observation. One man opposing another determines nothing; but a general union of minds, like a general combination of the forces of all mankind, makes a strength that is irresistible. In fact, as he who does not know himself, does not know others, so it may be said with equal truth, that he who does not know others, knows himself but very imperfectly.

A man who thinks he is guarding himself against prejudices by resisting the authority of others, leaves open every avenue to singularity, vanity, self-conceit, obstinacy, and many other vices, all tending to warp the judgment, and prevent the natural operation of his faculties. This submission to others is a deference which we owe, and indeed are forced involuntarily to pay. In fact, we never are satisfied with our opinions, whatever we may pretend, till they are ratified and confirmed by the suffrages of the rest of mankind. We dispute and wrangle for ever; we endeavour to get men to come to us, when we do not go to them.

He therefore who is acquainted with the works which have pleased different ages and different countries, and has formed his opinion on them, has more materials, and more means of knowing what is analogous to the mind of man, than he who is conversant

only with the works of his own age or country. What has pleased, and continues to please, is likely to please again: hence are derived the rules of art, and on this immoveable foundation they must ever stand.

This search and study of the history of the mind, ought not to be confined to one art only. It is by the analogy that one art bears to another, that many things are ascertained, which either were but faintly seen, or, perhaps, would not have been discovered at all, if the inventor had not received the first hints from the practices of a sister art on a similar occasion.* The frequent allusions which every man who treats of any art is obliged to make to others, in order to illustrate and confirm his principles, sufficiently show their near connection and inseparable relation.

All arts having the same general end, which is to please; and addressing themselves to the same faculties through the medium of the senses; it follows that their rules and principles must have as great affinity, as the different materials and the different organs or vehicles by which they pass to the mind, will permit them to retain.†

We may therefore conclude, that the real substance, as it may be called, of what goes under the name of taste, is fixed and established in the nature of things; that there are certain and regular causes by which the imagination and passions of men are affected; and that the knowledge of these causes is acquired by a laborious and diligent investigation of nature, and by the same slow progress as wisdom or know-

* Nulla ars, non alterius artis, aut mater, aut propinqua est. TERTULL. as cited by JUNIUS.

† Omnes artes quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione inter se continentur. CICERO.

ledge of every kind, however instantaneous its operations may appear when thus acquired.

It has been often observed, that the good and virtuous man alone can acquire this true or just relish even of works of art. This opinion will not appear entirely without foundation, when we consider that the same habit of mind, which is acquired by our search after truth, in the more serious duties of life, is only transferred to the pursuit of lighter amusements. The same disposition, the same desire to find something steady, substantial, and durable, on which the mind can lean, as it were, and rest with safety, actuates us in both cases. The subject only is changed. We pursue the same method in our search after the idea of beauty and perfection in each; of virtue, by looking forwards beyond ourselves to society, and to the whole; of arts, by extending our views in the same manner, to all ages and all times.

Every art, like our own, has in its composition, fluctuating as well as fixed principles. It is an attentive inquiry into their difference, that will enable us to determine how far we are influenced by custom and habit, and what is fixed in the nature of things.

To distinguish how much has solid foundation, we may have recourse to the same proof by which some hold that wit ought to be tried; whether it preserves itself when translated. That wit is false, which can subsist only in one language; and that picture which pleases only one age or one nation, owes its reception to some local or accidental association of ideas.

We may apply this to every custom and habit of life. Thus, the general principles of urbanity, politeness, or civility, have been the same in all nations; but the mode in which they are dressed is continually varying. The general idea of showing respect, is by

making yourself less; but the manner, whether by bowing the body, kneeling, prostration, pulling off the upper part of our dress, or taking away the lower *, is a matter of custom.

Thus, in regard to ornaments, — it would be unjust to conclude, that, because they were at first arbitrarily contrived, they are therefore undeserving of our attention: on the contrary, he who neglects the cultivation of those ornaments, acts contrary to nature and reason. As life would be imperfect without its highest ornaments, the Arts, so these arts themselves would be imperfect without *their* ornaments. Though we, by no means, ought to rank these with positive and substantial beauties, yet it must be allowed, that a knowledge of both is essentially requisite towards forming a complete, whole, and perfect taste. It is in reality from the ornaments, that arts receive their peculiar character and complexion; we may add, that in them we find the characteristical mark of a national taste; as, by throwing up a feather in the air, we know which way the wind blows, better than by a more heavy matter.

The striking distinction between the works of the Roman, Bolognian, and Venetian schools, consists more in that general effect which is produced by colours, than in the more profound excellencies of the art; at least it is from thence that each is distinguished and known at first sight. Thus it is the ornaments, rather than the proportions of architecture, which at the first glance distinguish the different orders from each other; the Doric is known by its triglyphs, the Ionic by its volutes, and the Corinthian by its acanthus.

What distinguishes oratory from a cold narration is

* Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Exodus, iii. 5.

a more liberal, though chaste, use of those ornaments which go under the name of figurative and metaphorical expressions; and poetry distinguishes itself from oratory, by words and expressions still more ardent and glowing. What separates and distinguishes poetry, is more particularly the ornament of *verse;* it is this which gives it its character, and is an essential without which it cannot exist. Custom has appropriated different metre to different kinds of composition, in which the world is not perfectly agreed. In England the dispute is not yet settled, which is to be preferred, rhyme or blank verse. But however we disagree about what these metrical ornaments shall be, that some metre is essentially necessary, is universally acknowledged.

In poetry or eloquence, to determine how far figurative or metaphorical language may proceed, and when it begins to be affectation or beside the truth, must be determined by taste; though this taste, we must never forget, is regulated and formed by the presiding feelings of mankind, — by those works which have approved themselves to all times and all persons. Thus, though eloquence has undoubtedly an essential and intrinsic excellence, and immoveable principles common to all languages, founded in the nature of our passions and affections; yet it has its ornaments and modes of address, which are merely arbitrary. What is approved in the eastern nations as grand and majestic, would be considered by the Greeks and Romans as turgid and inflated; and they, in return, would be thought by the Orientals to express themselves in a cold and insipid manner.

We may add, likewise, to the credit of ornaments, that it is by their means that Art itself accomplishes its purpose. Fresnoy calls colouring, which is one of

the chief ornaments of painting, *lena sororis*, that which procures lovers and admirers to the more valuable excellencies of the art.

It appears to be the same right turn of mind which enables a man to acquire the *truth*, or the just idea of what is right, in the ornaments, as in the more stable principles of art. It has still the same centre of perfection, though it is the centre of a smaller circle.

To illustrate this by the fashion of dress, in which there is allowed to be a good or bad taste. The component parts of dress are continually changing from great to little, from short to long; but the general form still remains; it is still the same general dress, which is comparatively fixed, though on a very slender foundation; but it is on this which fashion must rest. He who invents with the most success, or dresses in the best taste, would probably, from the same sagacity employed to greater purposes, have discovered equal skill, or have formed the same correct taste, in the highest labours of art.

I have mentioned taste in dress, which is certainly one of the lowest subjects to which this word is applied; yet, as I have before observed, there is a right even here, however narrow its foundation, respecting the fashion of any particular nation. But we have still more slender means of determining, to which of the different customs of different ages or countries we ought to give the preference, since they seem to be all equally removed from nature. If an European, when he has cut off his beard, and put false hair on his head, or bound up his own natural hair in regular hard knots, as unlike nature as he can possibly make it; and after having rendered them immovable by the help of the fat of hogs, has covered the whole with flour, laid on by a machine with the utmost regularity; if, when thus

attired, he issues forth, and meets a Cherokee Indian, who has bestowed as much time at his toilet, and laid on with equal care and attention his yellow and red ochre on particular parts of his forehead or cheeks, as he judges most becoming; whoever of these two despises the other for this attention to the fashion of his country, which ever first feels himself provoked to laugh, is the barbarian.

All these fashions are very innocent; neither worth disquisition, nor any endeavour to alter them; as the charge would, in all probability, be equally distant from nature. The only circumstance against which indignation may reasonably be moved, is, where the operation is painful or destructive of health; such as some of the practices at Otaheite, and the straight lacing of the English ladies; of the last of which practices, how destructive it must be to health and long life, the professor of anatomy took an opportunity of proving a few days since in this Academy.

It is in dress as in things of greater consequence. Fashions originate from those only who have the high and powerful advantages of rank, birth, and fortune. Many of the ornaments of art, those at least for which no reason can be given, are transmitted to us, are adopted, and acquire their consequence from the company in which we have been used to see them. As Greece and Rome are the fountains from whence have flowed all kinds of excellence, to that veneration which they have a right to claim for the pleasure and knowledge which they have afforded us, we voluntarily add our approbation of every ornament and every custom that belonged to them, even to the fashion of their dress. For it may be observed that, not satisfied with them in their own place, we make no difficulty of dressing statues of modern heroes or senators in the

fashion of the Roman armour or peaceful robe; we go so far as hardly to bear a statue in any other drapery.

The figures of the great men of those nations have come down to us in sculpture. In sculpture remain almost all the excellent specimens of ancient art. We have so far associated personal dignity to the persons thus represented, and the truth of art to their manner of representation, that it is not in our power any longer to separate them. This is not so in painting; because having no excellent ancient portraits, that connection was never formed. Indeed we could no more venture to paint a general officer in a Roman military habit, than we could make a statue in the present uniform. But since we have no ancient portraits, to show how ready we are to adopt those kind of prejudices, we make the best authority among the moderns serve the same purpose. The great variety of excellent portraits with which Vandyke has enriched this nation, we are not content to admire for their real excellence, but extend our approbation even to the dress which happened to be the fashion of that age. We all very well remember how common it was a few years ago for portraits to be drawn in this fantastic dress; and this custom is not yet entirely laid aside. By this means it must be acknowledged very ordinary pictures acquired something of the air and effect of the works of Vandyke, and appeared therefore at first sight to be better pictures than they really were; they appeared so, however, to those only who had the means of making this association; and when made, it was irresistible. But this association is nature, and refers to that secondary truth that comes from conformity to general prejudice and opinion; it is therefore not merely fantastical. Besides the prejudice which we have in favour of ancient dresses, there may be like-

wise other reasons for the effect which they produce; among which we may justly rank the simplicity of them, consisting of little more than one single piece of drapery, without those whimsical capricious forms by which all other dresses are embarrassed.

Thus, though it is from the prejudice we have in favour of the ancients, who have taught us architecture, that we have adopted likewise their ornaments; and though we are satisfied that neither nature nor reason are the foundation of those beauties which we imagine we see in that art, yet if any one, persuaded of this truth, should therefore invent new orders of equal beauty, which we will suppose to be possible, they would not please; nor ought he to complain, since the old has that great advantage of having custom and prejudice on its side. In this case we leave what has every prejudice in its favour, to take that which will have no advantage over what we have left, but novelty: which soon destroys itself, and at any rate is but a weak antagonist against custom.

Ancient ornaments, having the right of possession, ought not to be removed, unless to make room for that which not only has higher pretensions, but such pretensions as will balance the evil and confusion which innovation always brings with it.

To this we may add, that even the durability of the materials will often contribute to give a superiority to one object over another. Ornaments in buildings, with which taste is principally concerned, are composed of materials which last longer than those of which dress is composed; the former, therefore, make higher pretensions to our favour and prejudice.

Some attention is surely due to what we can no more get rid of, than we can go out of ourselves. We are creatures of prejudice; we neither can nor ought

to eradicate it; we must only regulate it by reason; which kind of regulation is indeed little more than obliging the lesser, the local and temporary prejudices, to give way to those which are more durable and lasting.

He, therefore, who in his practice of portrait-painting, wishes to dignify his subject, which we will suppose to be a lady, will not paint her in the modern dress, the familiarity of which alone is sufficient to destroy all dignity. He takes care that his work shall correspond to those ideas and that imagination which he knows will regulate the judgment of others; and, therefore, dresses his figure something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity, and preserves something of the modern for the sake of likeness. By this conduct his works correspond with those prejudices which we have in favour of what we continually see; and the relish of the antique simplicity corresponds with what we may call the more learned and scientific prejudice.

There was a statue made not long since of Voltaire, which the sculptor, not having that respect for the prejudices of mankind which he ought to have had, made entirely naked, and as meagre and emaciated as the original is said to be. The consequence was what might have been expected: it remained in the sculptor's shop, though it was intended as a public ornament and a public honour to Voltaire, for it was procured at the expence of his contemporary wits and admirers.

Whoever would reform a nation, supposing a bad taste to prevail in it, will not accomplish his purpose by going directly against the stream of their prejudices. Men's minds must be prepared to receive what is new to them. Reformation is a work of time. A national taste, however wrong it may be, cannot be totally

changed at once; we must yield a little to the prepossession which has taken hold on the mind, and we may then bring people to adopt what would offend them, if endeavoured to be introduced by violence. When Battista Franco was employed, in conjunction with Titian, Paul Veronese and Tintoret, to adorn the library of St. Mark, his work, Vasari says, gave less satisfaction than any of the others: the dry manner of the Roman school was very ill calculated to please eyes that had been accustomed to the luxuriancy, splendour, and richness of Venetian colouring. Had the Romans been the judges of this work, probably the determination would have been just contrary; for in the more noble parts of the art Battista Franco was perhaps not inferior to any of his rivals.

GENTLEMEN,

It has been the main scope and principal end of this discourse to demonstrate the reality of a standard in taste, as well as in corporeal beauty; that a false or depraved taste is a thing as well known, as easily discovered, as any thing that is deformed, mis-shapen, or wrong, in our form or outward make; and that this knowledge is derived from the uniformity of sentiments among mankind, from whence proceeds the knowledge of what are the general habits of nature; the result of which is an idea of perfect beauty.

If what has been advanced be true, — that beside this beauty or truth, which is formed on the uniform, eternal, and immutable laws of nature, and which of necessity can be but *one;* that beside this one immutable verity there are likewise what we have called apparent or secondary truths, proceeding from local and temporary prejudices, fancies, fashions or accidental connection of ideas; if it appears that these

last have still their foundation, however slender, in the original fabric of our minds; it follows that all these truths or beauties deserve and require the attention of the artist, in proportion to their stability or duration, or as their influence is more or less extensive. And let me add, that as they ought not to pass their just bounds, so neither do they, in a well-regulated taste, at all prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, which alone can give to art its true and permanent dignity.

To form this just taste is undoubtedly in your own power, but it is to reason and philosophy that you must have recourse; from them you must borrow the balance, by which is to be weighed and estimated the value of every pretension that intrudes itself on your notice.

The general objection which is made to the introduction of Philosophy into the regions of taste, is, that it checks and restrains the flights of the imagination, and gives that timidity, which an over-carefulness not to err or act contrary to reason is likely to produce. It is not so. Fear is neither reason nor philosophy. The true spirit of philosophy, by giving knowledge, gives a manly confidence, and substitutes rational firmness in the place of vain presumption. A man of real taste is always a man of judgment in other respects; and those inventions which either disdain or shrink from reason, are generally, I fear, more like the dreams of a distempered brain, than the exalted enthusiasm of a sound and true genius. In the midst of the highest flights of fancy or imagination, reason ought to preside from first to last, though I admit her more powerful operation is upon reflection.

Let me add, that some of the greatest names of antiquity, and those who have most distinguished them-

selves in works of genius and imagination, were equally eminent for their critical skill. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace; and among the moderns, Boileau, Corneille, Pope, and Dryden, are at least instances of genius not being destroyed by attention or subjection to rules and science. I should hope, therefore, that the natural consequence of what has been said, would be, to excite in you a desire of knowing the principles and conduct of the great masters of our art, and respect and veneration for them when known.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Delivered to the Students of the Royal Academy, on the Distribution of the Prizes, December 10. 1778.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ART, WHETHER POETRY OR PAINTING, HAVE THEIR FOUNDATION IN THE MIND; SUCH AS NOVELTY, VARIETY, AND CONTRAST; THESE IN THEIR EXCESS BECOME DEFECTS. — SIMPLICITY, ITS EXCESS DISAGREEABLE. — RULES NOT TO BE ALWAYS OBSERVED IN THEIR LITERAL SENSE: SUFFICIENT TO PRESERVE THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW. — OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRIZE PICTURES.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE recommended in former * discourses, that Artists should learn their profession by endeavouring to form an idea of perfection from the different excellencies which lie dispersed in the various schools of painting. Some difficulty will still occur, to know what is beauty, and where it may be found: one would wish not to be obliged to take it entirely on the credit of fame; though to this, I acknowledge, the younger students must unavoidably submit. Any suspicion in them of the chance of their being deceived, will have more tendency to obstruct their advancement, than even an enthusiastic confidence in the perfection of their models. But to the more advanced in the art, who wish to stand on more stable and firmer ground, and to establish principles on a stronger foundation than authority, however venerable or powerful, it may be safely told that there is still a higher tribunal, to which

* DISCOURSES II. and VI.

those great masters themselves must submit, and to which indeed every excellence in art must be ultimately referred. He who is ambitious to enlarge the boundaries of his art, must extend his views, beyond the precepts which are found in books or may be drawn from the practice of his predecessors, to a knowledge of those precepts in the mind, those operations of intellectual nature, — to which every thing that aspires to please, must be proportioned and accommodated.

Poetry having a more extensive power than our art, exerts its influence over almost all the passions; among those may be reckoned one of our most prevalent dispositions, anxiety for the future. Poetry operates by raising our curiosity, engaging the mind by degrees to take an interest in the event, keeping that event suspended, and surprising at last with an unexpected catastrophe.

The painter's art is more confined, and has nothing that corresponds with, or perhaps is equivalent to, this power and advantage of leading the mind on, till attention is totally engaged. What is done by Painting, must be done at one blow; curiosity has received at once all the satisfaction it can ever have. There are, however, other intellectual qualities and dispositions which the Painter can satisfy and affect as powerfully as the poet: among those we may reckon our love of novelty, variety, and contrast; these qualities, on examination, will be found to refer to a certain activity and restlessness which has a pleasure and delight in being exercised and put in motion: Art therefore only administers to those wants and desires of the mind.

It requires no long disquisition to show, that the dispositions which I have stated actually subsist in the human mind. Variety re-animates the attention, which

is apt to languish under a continual sameness. Novelty makes a more forcible impression on the mind, than can be made by the representation of what we have often seen before; and contrasts rouse the power of comparison by opposition. All this is obvious; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered, that the mind, though an active principle, has likewise a disposition to indolence; and though it loves exercise, loves it only to a certain degree, beyond which it is very unwilling to be led, or driven; the pursuit therefore of novelty and variety may be carried to excess. When variety entirely destroys the pleasure proceeding from uniformity and repetition, and when novelty counteracts and shuts out the pleasure arising from old habits and customs, they oppose too much the indolence of our disposition: the mind therefore can bear with pleasure but a small portion of novelty at a time. The main part of the work must be in the mode to which we have been used. An affection to old habits and customs I take to be the predominant disposition of the mind, and novelty comes as an exception: where all is novelty, the attention, the exercise of the mind is too violent. Contrast, in the same manner, when it exceeds certain limits, is as disagreeable as a violent and perpetual opposition; it gives to the senses, in their progress, a more sudden change than they can bear with pleasure.

It is then apparent, that those qualities, however they contribute to the perfection of Art, when kept within certain bounds, if they are carried to excess, become defects, and require correction: a work consequently will not proceed better and better as it is more varied; variety can never be the ground-work and principle of the performance — it must be only employed to recreate and relieve.

To apply these general observations which belong

equally to all arts, to ours in particular. In a composition, when the objects are scattered and divided into many equal parts, the eye is perplexed and fatigued, from not knowing where to find the principal action, or which is the principal figure; for where all are making equal pretensions to notice, all are in equal danger of neglect.

The expression which is used very often, on these occasions is, the piece wants repose; a word which perfectly expresses a relief of the mind from that state of hurry and anxiety which it suffers, when looking at a work of this character.

On the other hand, absolute unity, that is, a large work, consisting of one group or mass of light only, would be as defective as an heroic poem without episode, or any collateral incidents to recreate the mind with that variety which it always requires.

An instance occurs to me of two painters (Rembrandt and Poussin), of characters totally opposite to each other in every respect, but in nothing more than in their mode of composition, and management of light and shadow. Rembrandt's manner is absolute unity; he often has but one group, and exhibits little more than one spot of light in the midst of a large quantity of shadow: if he has a second mass, that second bears no proportion to the principal. Poussin, on the contrary, has scarce any principal mass of light at all, and his figures are often too much dispersed, without sufficient attention to place them in groups.

The conduct of these two painters is entirely the reverse of what might be expected from their general style and character; the works of Poussin being as much distinguished for simplicity, as those of Rembrandt for combination. Even this conduct of Poussin might proceed from too great an affection to simplicity of

another kind; too great a desire to avoid that ostentation of art, with regard to light and shadow, on which Rembrandt so much wished to draw the attention: however, each of them ran into contrary extremes, and it is difficult to determine which is the most reprehensible, both being equally distant from the demands of nature, and the purposes of art.

The same just moderation must be observed in regard to ornaments; nothing will contribute more to destroy repose than profusion, of whatever kind, whether it consists in the multiplicity of objects, or the variety and brightness of colours. On the other hand, a work without ornament, instead of simplicity, to which it makes pretensions, has rather the appearance of poverty. The degree to which ornaments are admissible, must be regulated by the professed style of the work; but we may be sure of this truth,—that the most ornamental style requires repose to set off even its ornaments to advantage. I cannot avoid mentioning here an instance of repose, in that faithful and accurate painter of nature, Shakspeare; the short dialogue between Duncan and Banquo, whilst they are approaching the gates of Macbeth's castle. Their conversation very naturally turns upon the beauty of its situation, and the pleasantness of the air: and Banquo observing the martlets' nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks, that where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind, after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that immediately succeeds. It seems as if Shakspeare asked himself, what is a prince likely to say to his attendants on such an occasion? The modern writers seem, on the contrary, to be al-

ways searching for new thoughts, such as never could occur to man in the situation represented. This is also frequently the practice of Homer; who, from the midst of battles and horrors, relieves and refreshes the mind of the reader, by introducing some quiet rural image, or picture of familiar domestic life. The writers of every age and country, where taste has begun to decline, paint and adorn every object they touch; are always on the stretch; never deviate or sink a moment from the pompous and the brilliant. Lucan, Statius, and Claudian, (as a learned critic has observed,) are examples of this bad taste and want of judgment; they never soften their tones, or condescend to be natural; all is exaggeration and perpetual splendour, without affording repose of any kind.

As we are speaking of excesses, it will not be remote from our purpose to say a few words upon simplicity; which, in one of the senses in which it is used, is considered as the general corrector of excess. We shall at present forbear to consider it as implying that exact conduct which proceeds from an intimate knowledge of simple unadulterated nature, as it is then only another word for perfection, which neither stops short of, nor oversteps, reality and truth.

In our inquiry after simplicity, as in many other inquiries of this nature, we can best explain what is right, by showing what is wrong; and, indeed, in this case it seems to be absolutely necessary: simplicity, being only a negative virtue, cannot be described or defined. We must therefore explain its nature, and show the advantage and beauty which is derived from it, by showing the deformity which proceeds from its neglect.

Though instances of this neglect might be expected to be found in practice, we should not expect to find

in the works of critics, precepts that bid defiance to simplicity and every thing that relates to it. Du Piles recommends to us portrait-painters, to add grace and dignity to the characters of those, whose pictures we draw: so far he is undoubtedly right; but, unluckily, he descends to particulars, and gives his own idea of grace and dignity, "*If*," says he, "*you draw persons of high character and dignity, they ought to be drawn in such an attitude, that the Portraits must seem to speak to us of themselves, and, as it were, to say to us, 'Stop, take notice of me, I am that invincible King, surrounded by Majesty:' 'I am that valiant commander, who struck terror every where:' 'I am that great minister, who knew all the springs of politics:' 'I am that magistrate of consummate wisdom and probity.*'" He goes on in this manner, with all the characters he can think on. We may contrast the tumour of this presumptuous loftiness with the natural unaffected air of the portraits of Titian, where dignity, seeming to be natural and inherent, draws spontaneous reverence, and instead of being thus vainly assumed, has the appearance of an unalienable adjunct; whereas such pompous and laboured insolence of grandeur is so far from creating respect, that it betrays vulgarity and meanness, and new-acquired consequence.

The painters, many of them at least, have not been backward in adopting the notions contained in these precepts. The portraits of Rigaud are perfect examples of an implicit observance of these rules of Du Piles; so that though he was a painter of great merit in many respects, yet that merit is entirely overpowered by a total absence of simplicity in every sense.

Not to multiply instances, which might be produced for this purpose, from the works of history-painters, I

shall mention only one, — a picture which I have seen, of the Supreme Being by Coypell.

This subject the Roman Catholic painters have taken the liberty to represent, however indecent the attempt, and however obvious the impossibility of any approach to an adequate representation; but here the air and character, which the Painter has given, and he has doubtless given the highest he could conceive, are so degraded by an attempt at such dignity as De Piles has recommended, that we are enraged at the folly and presumption of the artist, and consider it as little less than profanation.

As we have passed to a neighbouring nation for instances of want of this quality, we must acknowledge at the same time, that they have produced great examples of simplicity, in Poussin and Le Sueur. But as we are speaking of the most refined and subtle notion of perfection, may we not enquire, whether a curious eye cannot discern some faults, even in those great men? I can fancy, that even Poussin, by abhorring that affectation and that want of simplicity, which he observed in his countrymen, has, in certain particulars, fallen into the contrary extreme, so far as to approach to a kind of affectation: — to what, in writing, would be called pedantry.

When simplicity, instead of being a corrector, seems to set up for herself; that is, when an artist seems to value himself solely upon this quality; such an ostentatious display of simplicity becomes then as disagreeable and nauseous as any other kind of affectation. He is, however, in this case, likely enough to sit down contented with his own work, for though he finds the world look at it with indifference or dislike, as being destitute of every quality that can recreate or give pleasure to the mind, yet he consoles himself that it

has simplicity, a beauty of too pure and chaste a nature to be relished by vulgar minds.

It is in art as in morals; no character would inspire us with an enthusiastic admiration of his virtue, if that virtue consisted only in an absence of vice; something more is required; a man must do more than merely his duty, to be a hero.

Those works of the ancients, which are in the highest esteem, have something beside mere simplicity to recommend them. The Apollo, the Venus, the Laocoon, the Gladiator, have a certain composition of action, have contrasts sufficient to give grace and energy in a high degree; but it must be confessed of the many thousand antique statues which we have, that their general characteristic is bordering at least on inanimate insipidity.

Simplicity, when so very inartificial as to seem to evade the difficulties of art, is a very suspicious virtue.

I do not, however, wish to degrade simplicity from the high estimation in which it has been ever justly held. It is our barrier against that great enemy to truth and nature, Affectation, which is ever clinging to the pencil, and ready to drop in and poison every thing it touches.

Our love and affection to simplicity proceeds in a great measure from our aversion to every kind of affectation. There is likewise another reason why so much stress is laid upon this virtue; the propensity which artists have to fall into the contrary extreme; we therefore set a guard on that side which is most assailable. When a young artist is first told, that his composition and his attitudes must be contrasted, that he must turn the head contrary to the position of the body, in order to produce grace and animation; that his outline must be undulating, and swelling, to give

grandeur; and that the eye must be gratified with a variety of colours; when he is told this, with certain animating words of Spirit, Dignity, Energy, Grace, greatness of Style, and brilliancy of Tints, he becomes suddenly vain of his newly acquired knowledge, and never thinks he can carry those rules too far. It is then that the aid of simplicity ought to be called in to correct the exuberance of youthful ardour.

The same may be said in regard to colouring, which in its pre-eminence is particularly applied to flesh. An artist in his first essay of imitating nature, would make the whole mass of one colour, as the oldest painters did; till he is taught to observe not only the variety of tints, which are in the object itself, but the differences produced by the gradual decline of light to shadow: he then immediately puts his instruction in practice, and introduces a variety of distinct colours. He must then be again corrected and told, that though there is this variety, yet the effect of the whole upon the eye must have the union and simplicity of the colouring of nature.

And here we may observe, that the progress of an individual Student bears a great resemblance to the progress and advancement of the Art itself. Want of simplicity would probably be not one of the defects of an artist who had studied nature only, as it was not of the old masters, who lived in the time preceding the great Art of Painting; on the contrary, their works are too simple and too inartificial.

The Art in its infancy, like the first work of a Student, was dry, hard, and simple. But this kind of barbarous simplicity would be better named Penury, as it proceeds from mere want; from want of knowledge, want of resources, want of abilities to be other-

wise: their simplicity was the offspring, not of choice, but necessity.

In the second stage they were sensible of this poverty; and those who were the most sensible of the want, were the best judges of the measure of the supply. There were painters who emerged from poverty without falling into luxury. Their success induced others, who probably never would of themselves have had strength of mind to discover the original defect, to endeavour at the remedy by an abuse; and they ran into the contrary extreme. But however they may have strayed, we cannot recommend to them to return to that simplicity which they have justly quitted; but to deal out their abundance with a more sparing hand, with that dignity which makes no parade, either of its riches, or of its art. It is not easy to give a rule which may serve to fix this just and correct medium; because when we may have fixed, or nearly fixed the middle point, taken as a general principle, circumstances may oblige us to depart from it, either on the side of Simplicity, or on that of Variety and Decoration.

I thought it necessary in a former discourse, speaking of the difference of the sublime and ornamental style of painting,—in order to excite your attention to the more manly, noble, and dignified manner,—to leave perhaps an impression too contemptuous of those ornamental parts of our Art, for which many have valued themselves, and many works are much valued and esteemed.

I said then, what I thought it was right at that time to say; I supposed the disposition of young men more inclinable to splendid negligence, than perseverance in laborious application to acquire correctness; and therefore did as we do in making what is crooked straight,

by bending it the contrary way, in order that it may remain straight at last.

For this purpose, then, and to correct excess or neglect of any kind, we may here add, that it is not enough that a work be learned; it must be pleasing: the painter must add grace to strength, if he desires to secure the first impression in his favour. Our taste has a kind of sensuality about it, as well as a love of the sublime; both these qualities of the mind are to have their proper consequence, as far as they do not counteract each other; for that is the grand error which much care ought to be taken to avoid.

There are some rules, whose absolute authority, like that of our nurses, continues no longer than while we are in a state of childhood. One of the first rules, for instance, that I believe every master would give to a young pupil, respecting his conduct and management of light and shadow, would be what Lionardo da Vinci has actually given; that you must oppose a light ground to the shadowed side of your figure, and a dark ground to the light side. If Lionardo had lived to see the superior splendour and effect which has been since produced by the exactly contrary conduct, —by joining light to light and shadow to shadow, —though without doubt he would have admired it, yet, as it ought not, so probably it would not be the first rule with which he would have begun his instructions.

Again; in the artificial management of the figures, it is directed that they shall contrast each other according to the rules generally given; that if one figure opposes his front to the spectator, the next figure is to have his back turned, and that the limbs of each individual figure be contrasted; that is, if the right

leg be put forward, the right arm is to be drawn back.

It is very proper that those rules should be given in the Academy; it is proper the young students should be informed that some research is to be made, and that they should be habituated to consider every excellence as reducible to principles. Besides, it is the natural progress of instruction to teach first what is obvious and perceptible to the senses, and from hence proceed gradually to notions large, liberal, and complete, such as comprise the more refined and higher excellencies in Art. But when students are more advanced, they will find that the greatest beauties of character and expression are produced without contrast; nay more, that this contrast would ruin and destroy that natural energy of men engaged in real action, unsolicitous of grace. St. Paul preaching at Athens, in one of the Cartoons, far from any affected academical contrast of limbs, stands equally on both legs, and both hands are in the same attitude: all contrast, and the whole energy and unaffected grace of the figure is destroyed. Elymas the sorcerer stretches both hands forward in the same direction, which gives perfectly the expression intended. Indeed you never will find in the works of Raffaelle any of those school-boy affected contrasts. Whatever contrast there is, appears without any seeming agency of art, by the natural chance of things.

What has been said of the evil of excesses of all kinds, whether of simplicity, variety, or contrast, naturally suggests to the painter the necessity of a general inquiry into the true meaning and cause of rules, and how they operate on those faculties to which they are addressed: by knowing their general purpose and ill meaning, he will often find that he need not confine

himself to the literal sense; it will be sufficient if he preserve the spirit of the law.

Critical remarks are not always understood without examples: it may not be improper, therefore, to give instances where the rule itself, though generally received, is false, or where a narrow conception of it may lead the artists into great errors.

It is given as a rule by Fresnoy, That *the principal figure of a subject must appear in the midst of the picture, under the principal light, to distinguish it from the rest.* A painter who should think himself obliged strictly to follow this rule, would encumber himself with needless difficulties; he would be confined to great uniformity of composition, and be deprived of many beauties which are incompatible with its observance. The meaning of this rule extends, or ought to extend, no further than this:—That the principal figure should be immediately distinguished at the first glance of the eye; but there is no necessity that the principal light should fall on the principal figure, or that the principal figure should be in the middle of the picture. It is sufficient that it be distinguished by its place, or by the attention of other figures pointing it out to the spectator. So far is this rule from being indispensable, that it is very seldom practised; other considerations of greater consequence often standing in the way. Examples in opposition to this rule, are found in the Cartoons, in Christ's Charge to Peter, the Preaching of St. Paul, and Elymas the Sorcerer, who is undoubtedly the principal object in that picture. In none of those compositions is the principal figure in the midst of the picture. In the very admirable composition of the Tent of Darius, by Le Brun, Alexander is not in the middle of the picture, nor does the principal light fall on him; but the attention of all the other figures

immediately distinguishes him, and distinguishes him more properly; the greatest light falls on the daughter of Darius, who is in the middle of the picture, where it is more necessary the principal light should be placed.

It is very extraordinary that Felibien, who has given a very minute description of this picture, but indeed such a description as may be rather called panegyric than criticism, thinking it necessary (according to the precept of Fresnoy) that Alexander should possess the principal light, has accordingly given it to him; he might with equal truth have said that he was placed in the middle of the picture, as he seemed resolved to give this piece every kind of excellence which he conceived to be necessary to perfection. His generosity is here unluckily misapplied, as it would have destroyed, in a great measure, the beauty of the composition.

Another instance occurs to me, where equal liberty may be taken in regard to the management of light. Though the general practice is, to make a large mass about the middle of the picture surrounded by shadow, the reverse may be practised, and the spirit of the rule may still be preserved. Examples of this principle reversed may be found very frequently in the works of the Venetian School. In the great composition of Paul Veronese, THE MARRIAGE AT CANA, the figures are, for the most part, in half shadow; the great light is in the sky; and, indeed, the general effect of this picture, which is so striking, is no more than what we often see in landscapes, in small pictures of fairs and country feasts; but those principles of light and shadow, being transferred to a large scale, to a space containing nea a hundred figures as large as life, and conducted to a appearance with as much facility, and with an attentio

as steadily fixed upon *the whole together*, as if it were a small picture immediately under the eye, the work justly excites our admiration; the difficulty being encreased as the extent is enlarged.

The various modes of composition are infinite; sometimes it shall consist of one large group in the middle of the picture, and the smaller groups on each side; or a plain space in the middle, and the groups of figures ranked round this vacuity.

Whether this principal broad light be in the middle space of ground, as in THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS; or in the sky, as in THE MARRIAGE AT CANA, in THE ANDROMEDA, and in most of the pictures of Paul Veronese; or whether the light be on the groups; whatever mode of composition is adopted, every variety and licence is allowable: this only is indisputably necessary, that to prevent the eye from being distracted and confused by a multiplicity of objects of equal magnitude, those objects, whether they consist of lights, shadows, or figures, must be disposed in large masses and groups properly varied and contrasted; that to a certain quantity of action a proportioned space of plain ground is required; that light is to be supported by sufficient shadow; and we may add, that a certain quantity of cold colours is necessary to give value and lustre to the warm colours: what those proportions are cannot be so well learnt by precept as by observation on pictures, and in this knowledge bad pictures will instruct as well as good. Our inquiry why pictures have a bad effect, may be as advantageous as the inquiry why they have a good effect; each will corroborate the principles that are suggested by the other.

Though it is not my *business* to enter into the detail of our Art, yet I must take this opportunity of men-

tioning one of the means of producing that great effect which we observe in the works of the Venetian painters, as I think it is not generally known or observed. It ought, in my opinion, to be indispensably observed, that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm mellow colour, yellow, red, or a yellowish-white; and that the blue, the grey, or the green colours be kept almost entirely out of these masses, and be used only to support and set off these warm colours; and for this purpose, a small proportion of cold colours will be sufficient.

Let this conduct be reserved; let the light be cold, and the surrounding colours warm, as we often see in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters, and it will be out of the power of art, even in the hands of Rubens or Titian, to make a picture splendid and harmonious.

Le Brun and Carlo Maratti were two painters of great merit, and particularly what may be called Academical Merit, but were both deficient in this management of colours; the want of observing this rule is one of the causes of that heaviness of effect which is so observable in their works. The principal light in the Picture of Le Brun, which I just now mentioned, falls on Statira, who is dressed very injudiciously in a pale blue drapery: it is true, he has heightened this blue with gold, but that is not enough; the whole picture has a heavy air, and by no means answers the expectation raised by the print. Poussin often made a spot of blue drapery, when the general hue of the picture was inclinable to brown or yellow; which shows sufficiently, that harmony of colouring was not a part of the art that had much engaged the attention of that great painter.

The conduct of Titian in the picture of Bacchus

AND ARIADNE, has been much celebrated, and justly, for the harmony of colouring. To Ariadne is given (say the critics) a red scarf, to relieve the figure from the sea, which is behind her. It is not for that reason, alone, but for another of much greater consequence; for the sake of the general harmony and effect of the picture. The figure of Ariadne is separated from the great group, and is dressed in blue, which added to the colour of the sea, makes that quantity of cold colour which Titian thought necessary for the support and brilliancy of the great group; which group is composed, with very little exception, entirely of mellow colours. But as the picture in this case would be divided into two distinct parts, one half cold, and the other warm, it was necessary to carry some of the mellow colours of the great group into the cold part of the picture, and a part of the cold into the great group; accordingly Titian gave Ariadne a red scarf, and to one of the Bacchante a little blue drapery.

The light of the picture, as I observed, ought to be of a warm colour; for though white may be used for the principal light, as was the practice of many of the Dutch and Flemish painters, yet it is better to suppose *that white* illumined by the yellow rays of the setting sun, as was the manner of Titian. The superiority of which manner is never more striking than when in a collection of pictures we chance to see a portrait of Titian's hanging by the side of a Flemish picture (even though that should be of the hand of Vandyck), which, however admirable in other respects, becomes cold and grey in the comparison.

The illuminated parts of objects are in nature of a warmer tint than those that are in the shade: what I have recommended, therefore, is no more than that the same conduct be observed in the whole, which is

acknowledged to be necessary in every individual part. It is presenting to the eye the same effect as that which it has been *accustomed* to feel, which, in this case, as in every other, will always produce beauty; no principle, therefore, in our art can be more certain, or is derived from a higher source.

What I just now mentioned of the supposed reason why Ariadne has part of her drapery red, gives me occasion here to observe, that this favourite quality of giving objects relief, and which De Piles and all the Critics have considered as a requisite of the utmost importance, was not one of those objects which much engaged the attention of Titian; painters of an inferior rank have far exceeded him in producing this effect. This was a great object of attention, when art was in its infant state; as it is at present with the vulgar and ignorant, who feel the highest satisfaction in seeing a figure, which, as they say, looks as if they could walk round it. But however low I may rate this pleasure of deception, I should not oppose it, did it not oppose itself to a quality of a much higher kind, by counteracting entirely that fulness of manner which is so difficult to express in words, but which is found in perfection in the best works of Correggio, and we may add, of Rembrandt. This effect is produced by melting and losing the shadows in a ground still darker than those shadows; whereas that relief is produced by opposing and separating the ground from the figure, either by light, or shadow, or colour. This conduct of in-laying, as it may be called, figures on their ground, in order to produce relief, was the practice of the old Painters, such as Andrea Mantegna, Pietro Perugino, and Albert Durer; and to these we may add the first manner of Lionardo da Vinci, Giorgione, and even Correggio; but these three were among the first who

began to correct themselves in dryness of style, by no longer considering relief as a principal object. As those two qualities, relief, and fulness of effect, can hardly exist together, it is not very difficult to determine to which we ought to give the preference. An artist is obliged for ever to hold a balance in his hand, by which he must determine the value of different qualities; that, when *some* fault must be committed, he may choose the least. Those painters who have best understood the art of producing a good effect, have adopted one principle that seems perfectly conformable to reason; that a part may be sacrificed for the good of the whole. Thus, whether the masses consist of light or shadow, it is necessary that they should be compact and of a pleasing shape: to this end some parts may be made darker and some lighter, and reflections stronger than nature would warrant. Paul Veronese took great liberties of this kind. It is said, that being once asked why certain figures were painted in shade, as no cause was seen in the picture itself, he turned off the inquiry by answering, "*una nuevola che passa*," a cloud is passing, which has overshadowed them.

But I cannot give a better instance of this practice than a picture which I have of Rubens; it is a representation of a Moonlight. Rubens has not only diffused more light over the picture than is in nature, but has bestowed on it those warm glowing colours by which his works are so much distinguished. It is so unlike what any other painters have given us of Moonlight, that it might be easily mistaken, if he had not likewise added stars, for a fainter setting sun. — Rubens thought the eye ought to be satisfied in this case, above all other considerations: he might, indeed, have made it more natural, but it would have been at the expence of what he thought of much greater consequence, —

the harmony proceeding from the contrast and variety of colours.

This same picture will furnish us with another instance, where we must depart from nature for a greater advantage. The Moon in this picture does not preserve so great a superiority in regard to its lightness over the object which it illumines, as it does in nature; this is likewise an intended deviation, and for the same reason. If Rubens had preserved the same scale of gradation of light between the Moon and the objects, which is found in nature, the picture must have consisted of one small spot of light only, and at a little distance from the picture nothing but this spot would have been seen. It may be said, indeed, that this being the case, it is a subject that ought not to be painted: but then, for the same reason, neither armour, nor any thing shining ought ever to be painted; for though pure white is used in order to represent the greatest light of shining objects, it will not in the picture preserve the same superiority over flesh, as it has in nature, without keeping that flesh-colour of a very low tint. Rembrandt, who thought it of more consequence to paint light than the objects that are seen by it, has done this in a picture of Achilles which I have. The head is kept down to a very low tint, in order to preserve this due gradation and distinction between the armour and the face; the consequence of which is, that upon the whole, the picture is too black. Surely too much is sacrificed here to this narrow conception of nature: allowing the contrary conduct a fault, yet it must be acknowledged a less fault than making a picture so dark that it cannot be seen without a peculiar light, and then with difficulty. The merit or demerit of the different conduct of Rubens and Rembrandt in those instances which I have given,

is not to be determined by the narrow principles of nature, separated from its effect on the human mind. Reason and common sense tell us, that before, and above all other considerations, it is necessary that the work should be seen, not only without difficulty or inconvenience, but with pleasure and satisfaction; and every obstacle which stands in the way of this pleasure and convenience must be removed.

The tendency of this Discourse, with the instances which have been given, is not so much to place the Artist above rules, as to teach him their reason; to prevent him from entertaining a narrow confined conception of Art; to clear his mind from a perplexed variety of rules and their exceptions, by directing his attention to an intimate acquaintance with the passions and affections of the mind, from which all rules arise, and to which they are all referable. Art effects its purpose by their means; an accurate knowledge, therefore, of those passions and dispositions of the mind is necessary to him who desires to affect them upon sure and solid principles.

A complete essay or inquiry into the connection between the rules of Art, and the eternal and immutable dispositions of our passions, would be indeed going at once to the foundation of criticism*; but I am too well convinced what extensive knowledge, what subtle and penetrating judgment would be required, to engage in such an undertaking: it is enough for me, if in the language of painters, I have produced a slight sketch of a part of this vast composition, but that sufficiently distinct to show the usefulness of such a theory, and its practicability.

* This was inadvertently said. I did not recollect the admirable treatise *On the Sublime and Beautiful.*

Before I conclude, I cannot avoid making one observation on the pictures now before us. I have observed, that every candidate has copied the celebrated invention of Timanthes in hiding the face of Agamemnon in his mantle; indeed, such lavish encomiums have been bestowed on this thought, and that too by men of the highest character in critical knowledge, — Cicero, Quintilian, Valerius, Maximus, and Pliny, — and have been since re-echoed by almost every modern that has written on the Arts, that your adopting it can neither be wondered at, nor blamed. It appears now to be so much connected with the subject, that the spectator would perhaps be disappointed in not finding united in the picture what he always united in his mind, and considered as indispensably belonging to the subject. But it may be observed, that those who praise this circumstance were not painters. They use it as an illustration only of their own art; it served their purpose, and it was certainly not their business to enter into the objections that lie against it in another Art. I fear *we* have but very scanty means of exciting those powers over the imagination which make so very considerable and refined a part of poetry. It is a doubt with me, whether we should even make the attempt. The chief, if not the only occasion, which the painter has for this artifice, is, when the subject is improper to be more fully represented, either for the sake of decency, or to avoid what would be disagreeable to be seen: and this is not to raise or increase the passions, which is the reason that is given for this practice, but on the contrary to diminish their effect.

It is true, sketches, or such drawings as painters generally make for their works, give this pleasure of imagination to a high degree. From a slight, undeter-

finished drawing, where the ideas of the composition and character are, as I may say, only just touched upon, the imagination supplies more than the painter himself, probably, could produce; and we accordingly often find that the finished work disappoints the expectation that was raised from the sketch; and this power of the imagination is one of the causes of the great pleasure we have in viewing a collection of drawings by great painters. These general ideas, which are expressed in sketches, correspond very well to the art often used in Poetry. A great part of the beauty of the celebrated description of Eve in Milton's PARADISE LOST, consists in using only general indistinct expressions, every reader making out the detail according to his own particular imagination,—his own idea of beauty, grace, expression, dignity, or loveliness: but a painter, when he represents Eve on a canvass, is obliged to give a determined form, and his own idea of beauty distinctly expressed.

We cannot on this occasion, nor indeed on any other, recommend an undeterminate manner or vague ideas of any kind, in a complete and finished picture. This notion, therefore, of leaving any thing to the imagination, opposes a very fixed and indispensable rule in our art,—that every thing shall be carefully and distinctly expressed, as if the painter knew, with correctness and precision, the exact form and character of whatever is introduced into the picture. This is what with us is called Science, and Learning: which must not be sacrificed and given up for an uncertain and doubtful beauty, which, not naturally belonging to our Art, will probably be sought for without success.

Mr. Falconet has observed, in a note on this passage in his translation of Pliny, that the circumstance of covering the face of Agamemnon was probably not in

consequence of any fine imagination of the painter,—which he considers as a discovery of the critics,—but merely copied from the description of the sacrifice, as it is found in Euripides.

The words from which the picture is supposed to be taken, are these: *Agamemnon saw Iphigenia advance towards the fatal altar; he groaned, he turned aside his head, he shed tears, and covered his face with his robe.*

Falconet does not at all acquiesce in the praise that is bestowed on Timanthes; not only because it is not his invention, but because he thinks meanly of this trick of concealing, except in instances of blood, where the objects would be too horrible to be seen; but, says he, "in an afflicted Father, in a King, in Agamemnon, you, who are a painter, conceal from me the most interesting circumstance, and then put me off with sophistry and a veil. You are (he adds) a feeble Painter, without resource: you do not know even those of your Art: I care not what veil it is, whether closed hands, arms raised, or any other action that conceals from me the countenance of the Hero. You think of veiling Agamemnon; you have unveiled your own ignorance. A Painter who represents Agamemnon veiled, is as ridiculous as a Poet would be, who in a pathetic situation, in order to satisfy my expectations, and rid himself of the business, should say, that the sentiments of his hero are so far above whatever can be said on the occasion, that he shall say nothing."

To what Falconet has said, we may add, that supposing this method of leaving the expression of grief to the imagination, to be, as it was thought to be, the invention of the painter, and that it deserves all the praise that has been given it, still it is a trick that

will serve but once; whoever does it a second time, will not only want novelty, but be justly suspected of using artifice to evade difficulties. If difficulties overcome make a great part of the merit of Art, difficulties evaded can deserve but little commendation.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

Digitized with financial assistance from
Hermès India
a project facilitated by the Rotary Club of Bombay
on 12 April, 2019